Tuesday 6 May 2025

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The 9 lives of Minolta

The unexpected and innovative cameras of an underrated brand

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MAY 2025

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© MANDY BARKER

© ANDREW WALKER

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Welcome

Welcome to our special film issue, dedicated to all things analogue. Even if you no longer shoot film yourself there's plenty of nostalgia within this issue's pages. We look back at the history of Minolta, test a new version of a classic Rollei, and a DIY pinhole camera. Andrew Walker's digital conversion of an old plate camera is a particular highlight for me. And this issue sees the welcome return of our 'From the Archive' feature which revisits old AP's from back in the day. If you haven't yet secured your ticket for AP's Festival of Outdoor Photography, don't delay – we've got a fantastic programme of talks lined up from some of the biggest legends in photography, and tickets are selling fast. Details are on page 60. **Nigel Atherton, Editor**

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COVER PICTURE © ANDREW WALKER. INSET OF LEAF PORTRAIT: © YINNA HIGUERA, COLOMBIA, SHORTLIST, PROFESSIONAL COMPETITION, CREATIVE, 2025 SONY WORLD PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS 2025. COURTESY OF WORLDPHOTO.ORG. INSET, BELOW: © THE ANONYMOUS PROJECT / LEE SHULMAN

Our cover image is by Andrew Walker. Find out how he attached his Sony A7 mirrorless camera to this old plate camera on page 76

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

AMY DAVIES
Features Editor

Amy speaks to Lee Shulman about his Anonymous Project book; and talks to Mandy Barker

JOHN WADE

Our expert on camera history looks at the innovative cameras in the nine lives of Minolta

DAMIEN DEMOLDER

AP's former editor talks to Andrew Walker, who has restored a 100-year-old camera

ANDY WESTLAKE
Technical Editor

Andy tests the Rollei 35AF film camera; and builds a JollyLook zoom pinhole camera

PETER DENCH

The AP regular interviews Yinna Higuera about her SWPA shortlisted entry – portraits printed onto leaves

AILSA MCWHINNIE

The APOY 2025 contest launches this issue! Our APOY coordinator shares details

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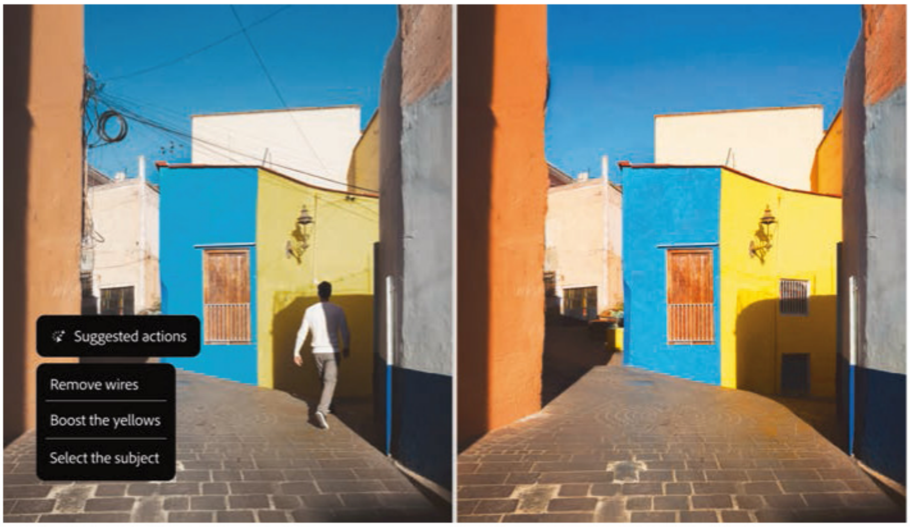


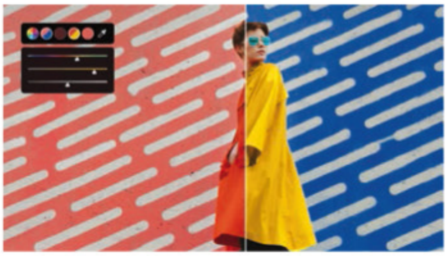
The new-look Actions panel will analyse your shots and suggest how you can edit them

Photoshop and Lightroom get easier to use

ADOBE MAX London took place at the end of April, with the software giant revealing how it's trying to make Photoshop, Lightroom and other powerful Creative Cloud applications simpler to use.

For example there is a 'reimagined' Actions panel in Photoshop which, while it is still at the beta stage, is intriguing. Actions are basically 'scripts' or a series of tasks that you play back on a single file or a batch of files – menu commands, panel options, tool actions, etc. Adobe has now made Actions much easier to find and apply in Photoshop, providing over 1,000 for common editing tasks, such as changing the colour of an item in a photo, enhancing the exposure or replacing an entire sky.

The new look Actions panel will analyse your image and come up with suggestions for editing it. What's more, this new generation of Actions is indexable and searchable, and you can search for them with everyday language text prompts (Adobe showed how typing in 'fuzz' would get the same effect as inputting 'bokeh', for example). These expanded Actions will work alongside the new generation of AI agents Adobe announced earlier this month.



Photoshop now lists colours in an image, for easier fine-tuning

Easier selection and colour editing tools

Adobe has also announced the full release of improved AI-driven detail selection tools for Photoshop. These aim to make it easier and quicker to select complex subjects, such as hair, facial features and clothing, right through to fiddly jobs like selecting the strings on a tennis racket. Adjusting colours has been made easier, too. Photoshop now lists the colours in an image, so you should be able to adjust the hue, saturation and lightness of a colour faster and more accurately. It's a simple yet elegant solution, and you wonder why Adobe didn't do it before. The big news for Lightroom users is the announcement of AI tools to select and edit specific areas and objects in a landscape, automatically creating masks for skies, water, plants and trees, for example.

While selective adjustment has long been a feature of the software, Adobe claims the new Select Landscape tools for Lightroom and Lightroom Classic make the process much easier, and these are available now. Quick Action upgrades also make it simpler to retouch group photos with more precision.

The firm also revealed significant updates to Firefly, the umbrella term for the company's AI generation tools. Firefly Image Model 4 claims to improve the generation of more realistic images, for example, while offering opportunities for editing and fine-tuning.

For more, see our longer website story at bit.ly/adobemaxshowreport

© PEDRO JARQUE KREBS

Love birds

THIS stunning image of two crested cranes features in *WildLove*, a new book by Pedro Jarque Krebs. Krebs, who has received more than 200 international photography awards, invites us to look beyond the species and into something shared: vulnerability, presence, and maybe even a bit of humour. *WildLove* is published by TeNeues and is on sale now for £29.95.

More free Societies roadshows

Canon
MIRRORLESS

THE SOCIETY of Photographers has announced free-to-enter roadshows from May to September, giving visitors the chance to try the latest cameras and learn from expert speakers. The schedule is as follows:

13 May – Wetherby Racecourse, Wetherby
14 May – Colwick Hall, Nottingham
15 May – Bank House Hotel, Spa & Golf Club, Worcester
16 September – Webbington Hotel & Spa, Somerset
17 September – Green Park Conference Centre, Reading
18 September – Priestfield Stadium, Kent
See thesocieties.net/roadshows

New book from our festival speaker

'Stunning photography... Andrew makes the ordinary look extraordinary.'
Iolo Williams
GARDEN SAFARI
Andrew Fusek Peters

Our star speaker's new book

GARDEN Safari, a new book by expert wildlife photographer and OM System Ambassador Andrew Fusek Peters, goes on sale on 8 May for £25. It shows how you can get amazing wildlife shots in your garden or local park, and Andrew will also be one of our star speakers at our Festival of Outdoor Photography in London (30 May to 1 June). Get your ticket at bit.ly/fopdetails – just use the Promotional Code: FINAL25 for your 25% off.

Half the Size, Twice the Story
PROVIA

Fujifilm has made a quite intriguing teaser video for its new camera

New Fujifilm camera coming

FUJIFILM has released a bare-bones teaser video for a new camera, which, while intriguing, gives very little away. Under the tagline 'Half the size, twice the story,' a new camera body emerges, but it's shrouded in darkness, so very few details can be made out – right down to pixel level.

You can see that the viewfinder is near the top left corner, however, and that there appears to be a screen showing the Provia film simulation mode (the Fujifilm X-Pro 3 had a similar, but square, screen). A dedicated screen showing which film simulation mode you've selected would be a significant addition, and we already know that Fujifilm regards these modes as a key selling point of its cameras.

Very little else can be gleaned from the teaser video, and there isn't a confirmed release date, though we assume it will be before the summer.

Lots of rumours are swirling around the internet, but we will update you as soon as we know specific details, as well as doing a full review as soon as samples become available.

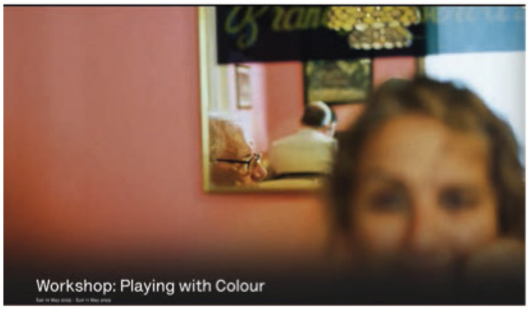
In the meantime, you can watch the teaser video at bit.ly/newfuji

Save money on workshops and courses

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS' Gallery, one of the best photography venues in London – located just off Oxford Street – is offering AP readers a discount on forthcoming workshops and online courses in May.

First up is a weekend workshop (10-11 May) on 'Playing with Colour', where photographer Quetzal Maucci will help to deepen your understanding of colour photography. See bit.ly/tpgcolourworkshop, where you can get £15 off using the code FRIEND15.

Then, from 19 May to 23 June, writer and lecturer Stephen Bull is running an online course about Celebrity and Photography on Monday evenings, where you'll learn about the connections between these two subjects from the 19th century to the present day. See bit.ly/tpgcelebrity, where you can get £20 off using the code FRIEND20.



AP readers can get a discount on selected workshops

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Don't miss our videos for the latest kit, tutorials, behind the scenes tours and exclusive interviews with top photographers

SOME RECENT VIDEOS

60s Classic cameras
WITH JOHN WADE
Groovy

LANDMARK Cameras
PART 1 WITH JOHN WADE

ADAPTIVE PRESETS
LrC

KODAK EKTAR H35N VS PENTAX 17
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Viewpoint
Gavin Stoker

Regular contributor Gavin is far from content with being labelled a 'content creator,' and here's why

The Canon EOS R50 – photography shouldn't be boiled down to 'content'

The launch of the 'video first' Canon R50 V vlogging camera, among others, has got me thinking. I noticed it happening more or less immediately after the pandemic. Perhaps you did too. With increasing frequency each press release I received heralding a new camera launch replaced the word photographer, videographer – or both – with the non-specific 'content creator'. At first, I assumed this was just the latest buzz word being trotted out by marketing teams. But was, in fact, a more fundamental shift taking place? And at a stealth-like pace?

It's true that the pandemic prompted a whole slew of new YouTube accounts and podcasts, as people sought to communicate ideas further than the four walls we were restricted within. A joke did the rounds that the surest sign of a mid-life crisis was becoming a vlogger or starting a podcast. Everybody seemed to be doing it, with variable results.

And here then is my problem with 'content' as a descriptor; it's a word that attempts to shoehorn together a broad church of creative output. It's a bland, business-like term that can only ever fall short of accurately describing whatever artistic pursuit it attempts to homogenise. Photography is, and always has been, an art. However, it seems even those making the cameras I use are now happy for photography to be reduced to mere 'content' for social media companies to train their AI with.

Don't forget us photographers

But still, 'content' was/is a buzz word and obviously camera manufacturers were/are keen to be seen to be reaching out to the burgeoning content creator market. Quick off the mark was Sony with its ZV range of compacts; small-ish bodies, wideangle lenses and flip-out screens catering to those users who like to walk and talk, filming their surrounds as well as their every utterance. And now, yes, Canon is the latest to join in with its Canon EOS R50 V and Canon V1 cameras.

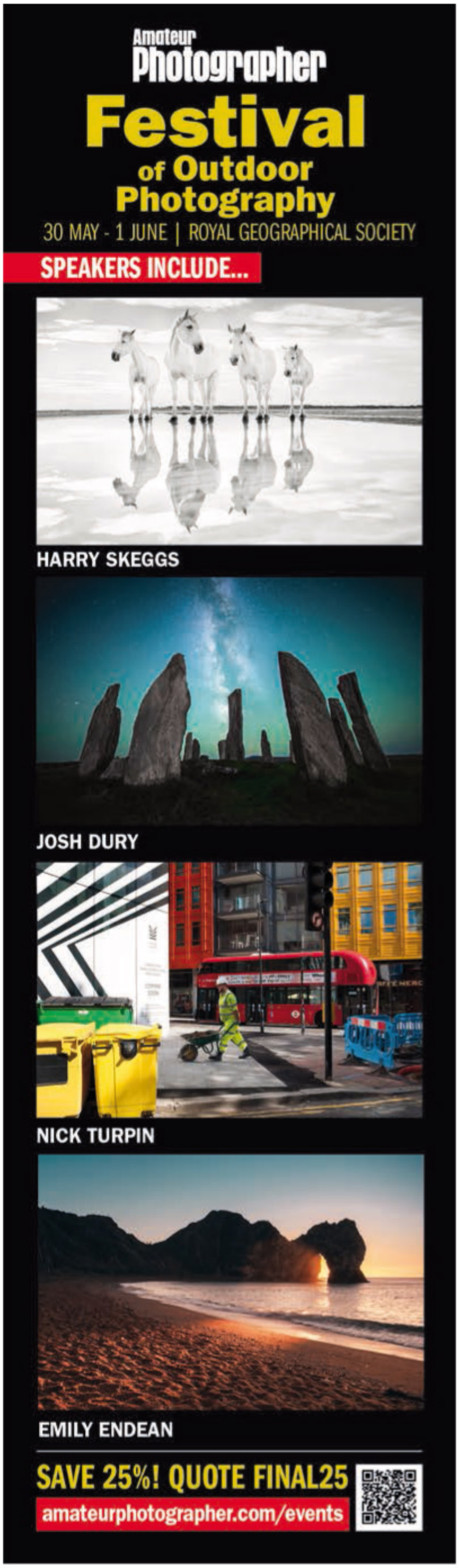
It may seem like common sense to pursue a market perceived as still in growth. Yet I have a hunch, however, that the podcaster/influencer customer base the big brands are now chasing is, in its very nature, far more transient than the hobbyist photographer who has been their bread and butter for years and years. And years.

When the going gets tough, podcasters and vloggers disappear, whereas when times get tough, photographers maintain focus, no pun intended. It's proved to be the case that in any financial recession people will still spend on the things they love. Photography is one of them. As they grab hungrily at any opportunity, however fleeting, perhaps the manufacturers would do well to remember that.

Gavin Stoker has been writing about and reviewing all things photographic for the best part of 25 years.

Do you have something you'd like to get off your chest? Send us your thoughts in around 500 words to the email address on page 3 and win a year's digital subscription to AP.

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS COLUMN ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHER MAGAZINE OR KELSEY MEDIA LIMITED



Amateur Photographer
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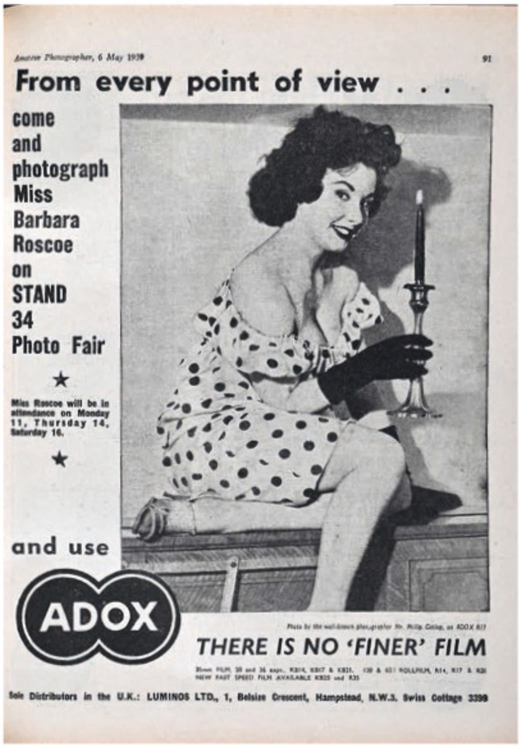
From the archive

Join us for a spin in the AP time machine as we look back to this week in 1959 and 1974

6 May 1959

For those who complain today's AP has too many ads, this week in 1959 you'd have had to navigate past 75 ad pages before you got to the welcome and contents page. The last 50 pages were also ads. The editorial content was preoccupied with the forthcoming Photo Fair at London Olympia, a forerunner of The Photography Show, with ten pages dedicated to a floorplan, exhibitor list and a preview of all the things to see and do for the 2s 6d admission fee – equivalent to £3.96 today. Of the 96 trade exhibitor stands at the show only Ilford, Kodak, Focal Press, the RPS and AP are still around today. The Fair would be showing 'well over 50 cameras that are either completely new, new to the country or so rare that... they are not likely to have been seen by more than a tiny minority of visitors.' The star attractions were the UK debuts of the Zeiss Ikon Contarex and the Voigtlander Bessamatic. For those more interested in taking pictures than looking at cameras the AP stand would be featuring a line-up of a dozen beauties 'dressed in charming summer frocks or beachwear'. One of the two studio sets would feature a sandy beach replete with beach balls, deck chairs and other props. Each studio would be lit by 10kw of lighting, supplied by GEC.



Amateur Photographer, 6 May 1959 91

From every point of view . . .

come
and
photograph
Miss
Barbara
Roscoe
on
STAND
34
Photo Fair

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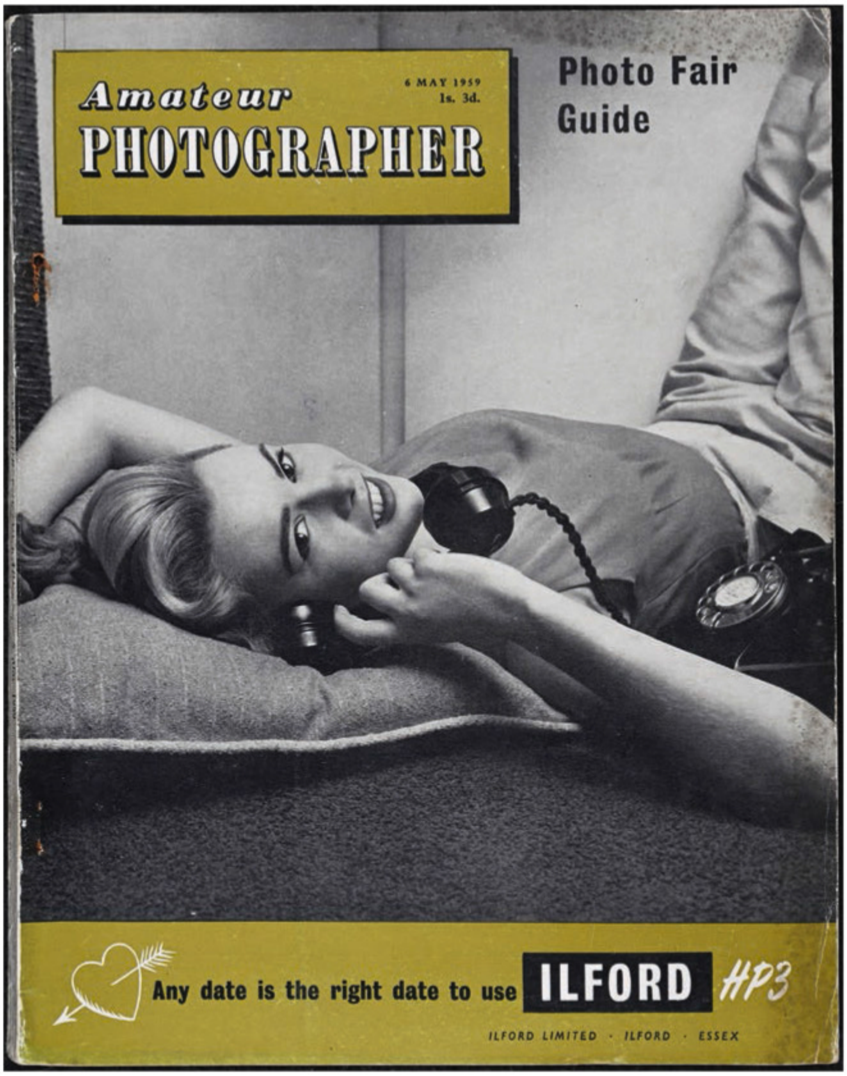
Amateur
PHOTOGRAPHER
6 MAY 1959
1s. 3d.
Photo Fair
Guide
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Above: 'How do you get Instagram on this thing?'

Left: Barbara Roscoe seems pleased to be modelling on the Adox Films stand at Photo Fair 1959

Right: Tips on how to win the AP cover shoot competition from cover maestro Kevin MacDonnell

How to Set About Producing—

AN "A.P." FRONT COVER

Are you going to enter for the "A.P." Cover Competition? If so, you will want to read this practical article by KEVIN MACDONNELL, who has produced more "A.P." Cover Pictures than any other photographer in recent years

NATIONAL HALL • OLYMPIA

PHOTO FAIR

11-16 MAY, 1959

Admission 2s. 6d.

ALL ABOUT PHOTO FAIR

A GUIDE to the EXHIBITORS

In Alphabetical Order

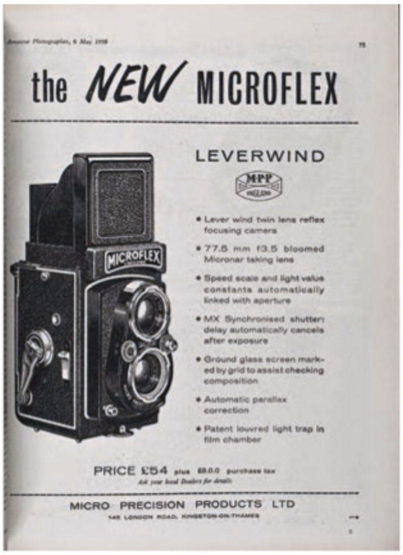
In Stand Number Order

HOW TO GET TO PHOTO FAIR AT OLYMPIA

A GUIDE TO PHOTO FAIR

Continues on the next two pages

This issue was all about the Photo Fair at London Olympia, an early forerunner of TPS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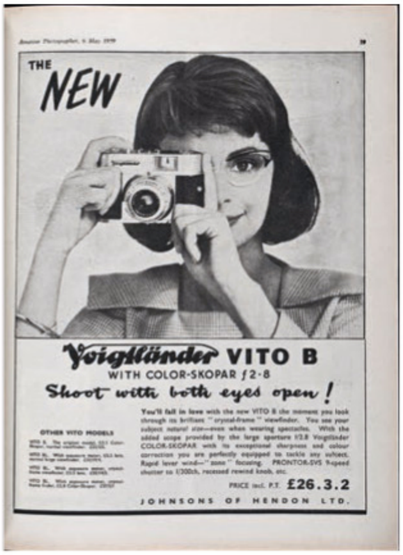
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A Beautiful . . .
Round Dozen

Annabel Binnie (aged 18)	Kilmacolm.
Joanna Crundall (18)	Marlborough.
Karen Esslinger (17)	Cape Town.
Lesley Fowler (15)	Hackney.
Sonia Fulton (22)	Newport, Mon.
Diana Cave-Hawkes (16)	Barnes, Surrey.
Vanessa Nunn (21)	Johannesburg.
Maria Radford (21)	Kensington.
Carrie Knight-Rodgers (20)	Singapore.
Dagmar Roubicek (20)	Montreal.
Victoria Strevens (17)	Ongar.
Daphne Thomas (19)	India.

Some of the Girls. Annabel Binnie photographing, left to right: Karen Esslinger, Vanessa Nunn and Daphne Thomas.

speed. In the first place there is the risk of movement but also the girl is likely to receive directions at any time from one or other of the photographers present and may move unexpectedly to take up a different attitude. Look out for these moments of transition particularly, as they often produce livelier expressions than during the period of the set pose.

The use of high shutter-speeds means a correspondingly large lens aperture but provided you have focussed accurately this has the advantage of putting the background slightly out in charge in the studio and provided they do not interfere with other workers, but the ciné man will be given special facilities.

The winners of the three studio competitions, monochrome, colour and ciné, are most likely to be those who do some planning beforehand and then take advantage of what opportunities occur at their actual session. A previous view of the studio to see what goes on in it is obviously a great help and if two actual sessions on the stand itself can be arranged so much the better. This applies especially to the ciné man whose success almost

Four of the 12 beauties modelling in the two studios on the AP stand at Photo Fair

8th May 1974

MAY 8 1974 20p
amateur photographer

This week's cover story is all about pschedelic colour glamour photography using multi-image prisms, Vaseline diffusion, double exposures and all manner of pre-photoshop skullduggery, with of course the obligatory high nipple count. Also in this issue, AP takes 30 readers on an African safari for a feature that hasn't aged well, and Ron Spillman tests the Miranda Auto Sensorex EE which he finds to be good value for its £185 price tag (£3,025 today).

Creative glamour tips from Michael Barrington Martin, who doesn't care which camera he uses as long as it's loaded with Agfachrome slide film

TO DARKEST AFRICA WITH A CAMERA

Left: A report on a reader safari by AP Editor Reg Mason

Right: Ron Spillman's Miranda Auto Sensorex EE review

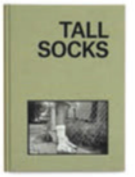
TEST REPORT
Miranda Auto Sensorex EE

Tall Socks

by Mark Cohen

£50, GOST, hardback, 128 pages, ISBN: 9781915423740

A look at the gritty underbelly of 1970s New York in images published for the first time. An exciting and raw collection, says **Amy Davies**



In July 1973, the photographer Mark Cohen spent a month living in a dorm room at New York University (NYU) while taking part in a film production workshop. The daily classes were short enough that he had plenty of spare time to walk around the city with his camera. At the time, only a few of the images he shot were printed, with the vast majority remaining unseen – except as negatives – until now.

During this decade, New York had a notorious reputation for high crime rates, with social disorder, a dangerous subway system and a quality of life which was far from ideal.

Beyond that, a tough economic backdrop had affected the city badly, with many of its middle-class residents moving to the suburbs.

We can see evidence of all of that in the graffiti, litter and ruins present in the streets – but we also see a vibrancy in the lives of the characters depicted too.

The book is presented in no particular order, but you're left with an impression of someone who is wandering round a city and just observing what is in front of him, leaving the people in the pictures undisturbed. They certainly don't seem to show any particular awareness, or care, that they are being photographed. Mind you, if you've ever been to New York yourself, you'll see that is true of most of its residents even today.

Both humour and threat exist side by side in these shots. A child's tall socks (hence the name), a lady with peacock feathers, a girl carrying a plank of wood across a cobbled street, are juxtaposed with menacing shots from subway stations.

Cohen uses a singular photographic style, and has done throughout his career. He shoots from the hip, and often close-up to his subjects. This gives him a different perspective, sometimes childlike but always visceral, giving us a feeling of really being there.

For those interested in New York, street photography, black & white and more besides, this is a fantastic addition to your bookshelf and one I'll be returning to many times.

Above: People in line

Left: Arm in candy machine

Right: White purse

ALL IMAGES © MARK COHEN

Books & exhibitions

The latest and best books and exhibitions from the world of photography

© JOHN BENTLEY

Ribblehead Viaduct

The Settle to Carlisle Line by John Bentley

£19.99, Amberley Publishing, softback, 128 pages, ISBN: 9781398120891

THE SETTLE TO CARLISLE LINE

One of the most scenic routes in Britain, the line between Settle and Carlisle in the North West of England is the subject of this charming new book.

Meandering across moors and mountainsides, the line allows us to take in the Yorkshire Dales and the North Pennines. The line is famous for its views of tunnels and viaducts, most famously perhaps the Ribblehead Viaduct.

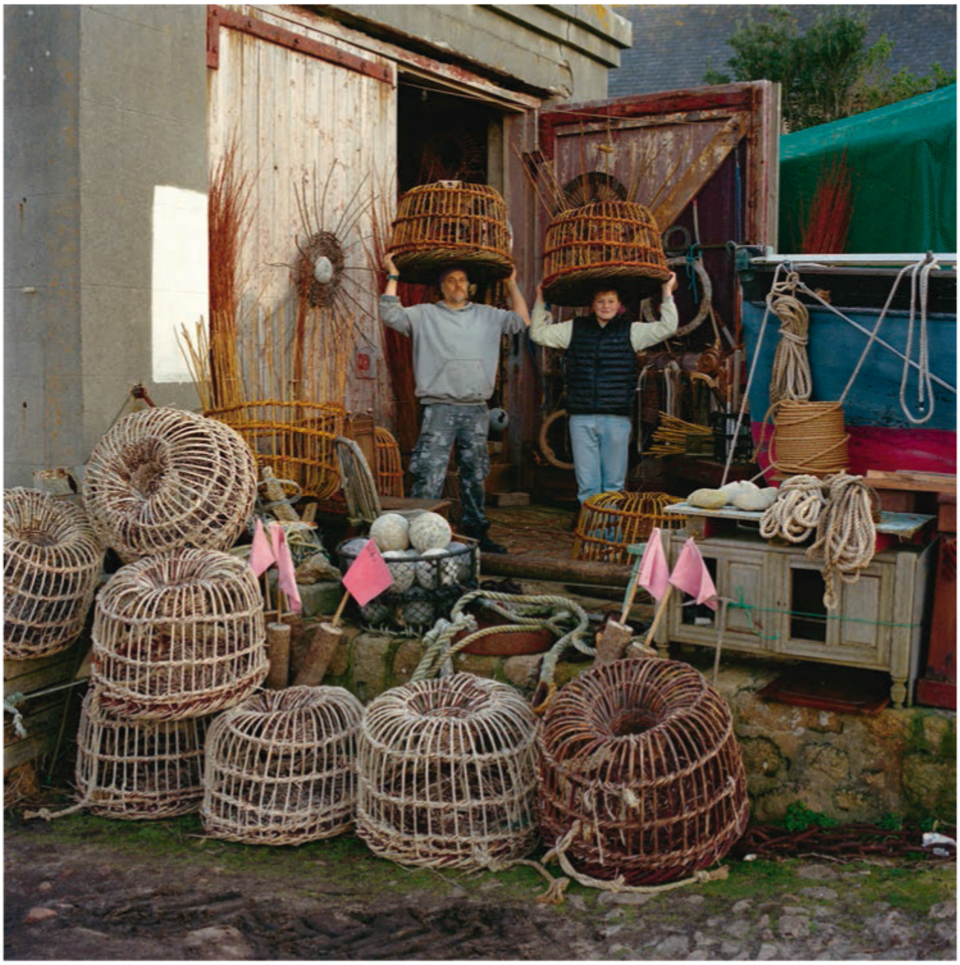
A remarkable feat of Victorian engineering, it faced threats of closure from British rail in the 1980s, with campaigners fighting hard to keep it open. Today, there's a growing number of passengers travelling the line, with closed stations reopening and steam-operated specials, charter trains and regular passenger and freight trains also to be seen.

John Bentley has captured the variety of workings on the line, as well as some of the beautiful scenery that surrounds it. Most of the images were taken during the past decade, but there are also some interesting shots from the 1980s when the line's future was in doubt.

As always from Amberley, this is a great-value title, and one you can also use as reference for your own travels to photograph the locations yourself.

© JOHN BENTLEY

Scots Guardsman arrives at Hellifield



ALL IMAGES © JON TONKS

Jof and son, Inigo, holding up handmade withy pots, Isles of Scilly

Roger, unloading his catch, Newlyn Harbour

David, at Newlyn Harbour after fishing for cuttlefish

A Fish Called Julie / In Waters Off Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

by Jon Tonks

Martin Parr Foundation, Bristol. Until 22 June

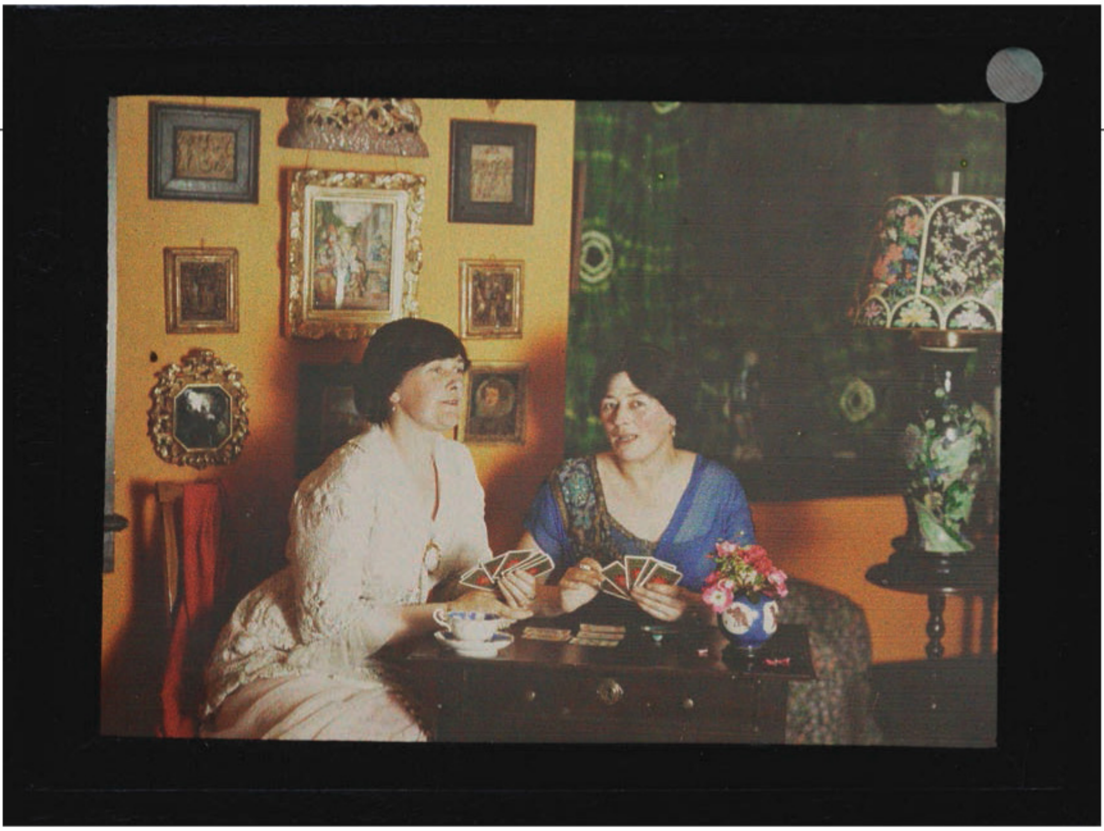
This collaboration between the photographer Jon Tonks, We Feed the UK and the Martin Parr Foundation has resulted in a new exhibition which shares the stories of those attempting to fish sustainably in waters off Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

A project from the Gaia Foundation aims to use the power of positive storytelling to increase support for food production which is more nature and environmentally friendly. As such, ten photographers and ten poets have been commissioned to tell ten stories around the UK. Works are being exhibited across the UK, with this new body of work by Jon Tonks appearing in Bristol.

For the images, Tonks spent over a year with those working in sustainable fishing in the area, documenting the stories of the stewards of the sea, and those preserving the livelihoods, culture and marine life which are found in the blue waters off the coast.

Climate change is adding to the pressures of overfishing and other problems which have been legitimised by laws which prioritise profit over sustainability. The work of the communities here aims to change that.

Tonks works with film for the project, and prints from the exhibition will go on sale to further fund the work. Sales will buy extra time to document the communities, as well as funding camera film (and pasties) in order to raise further awareness of what is an increasingly important topic.



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Left: Mrs Edith Bird and her sister playing cards, by Rober Bland Bird, c.1915-1917

Below: Now Guess! by Robert Bland Bird, c. 1916

The Colour of Clothes – Fashion and Dress in Autochromes 1907-1930

by Cally Blackman

£75, Thames and Hudson, hardback,
336 pages, ISBN: 9780500025482

Imagine what it must have been like to see colour photography for the first time. It's been around so long that it means next to nothing to us, but just think how early colour photography would have dazzled Edwardian eyes.

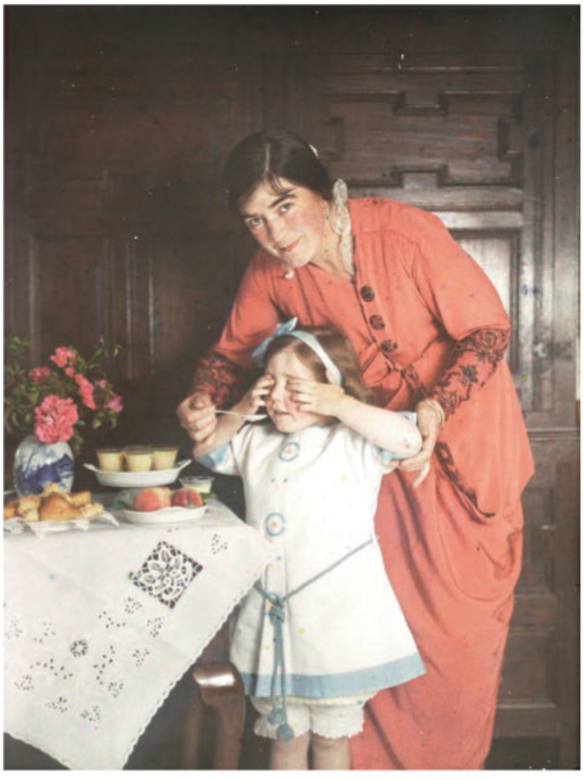
This new book celebrates the arrival of the autochrome in the early part of the 20th century. The colour process was invented by the Lumière brothers and transformed photography, but it also allowed for subjects such as fashion and clothes to finally be seen as they were intended.

Here we get a look at 370 images which are either never published before, or very rarely published, showing off some of the biggest names in fashion and design at the time – some of which are still around today. That includes Fortuny, Poiret, Doucet, Vionnet, Lucile, Chanel and Lanvin.

Some of the autochrome creators are also well-known photographers too, including Lartigue, Stieglitz and Steichen, while there are also many lesser-known photographers, including several women, who used the exciting new process to produce extraordinary results.

The book is written by Cally Blackman, a fashion historian, lecturer and author. She has extensively researched the use of autochromes and has collected many hundreds of images, all taken more than 100 years ago.

For those with both an interest in the history of photography and the history of photography – as well as the broader cultural implications that fashion has – this is an absolute treasure.



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Our favourite photos posted by readers on our social media channels this week

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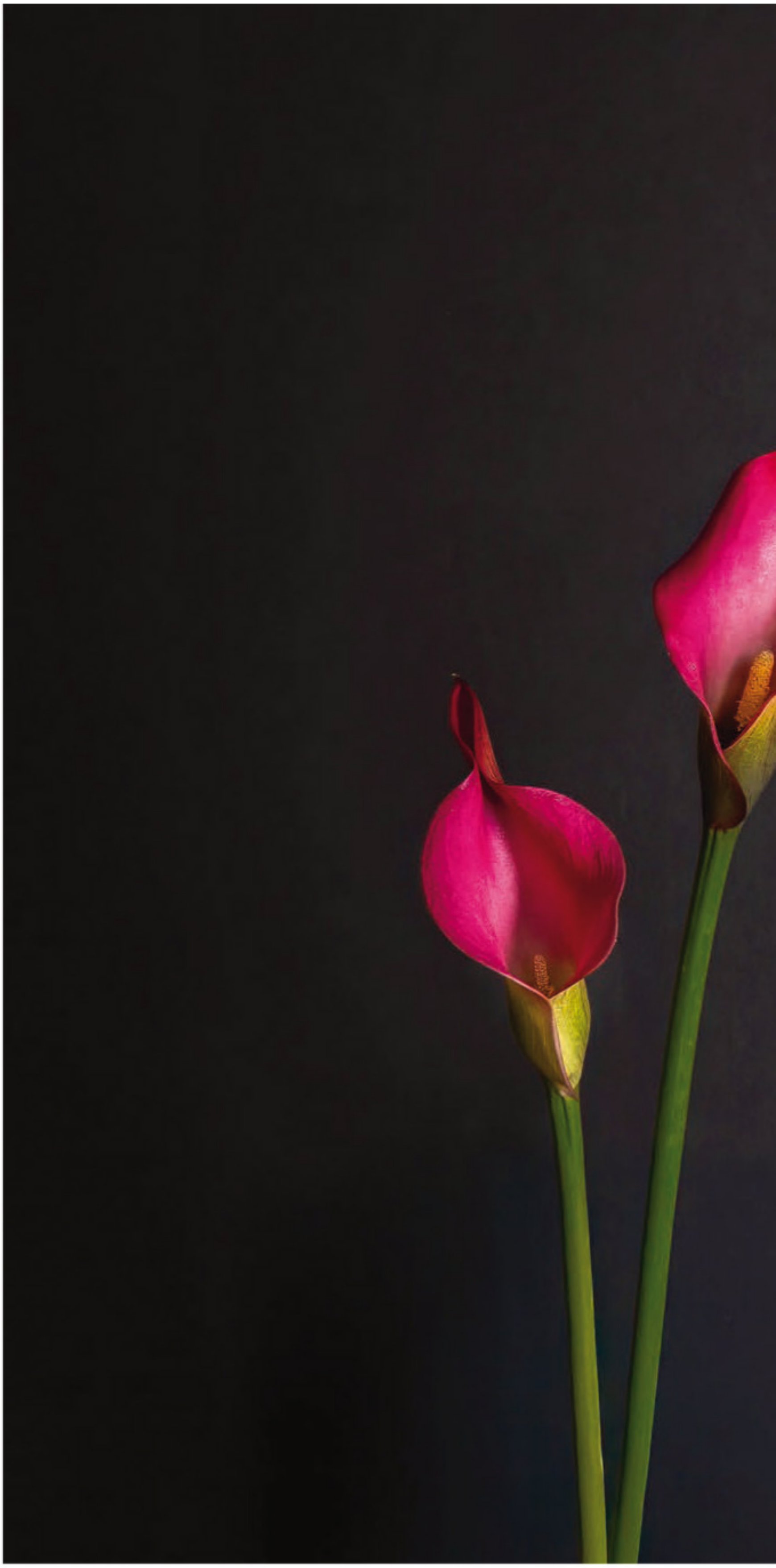
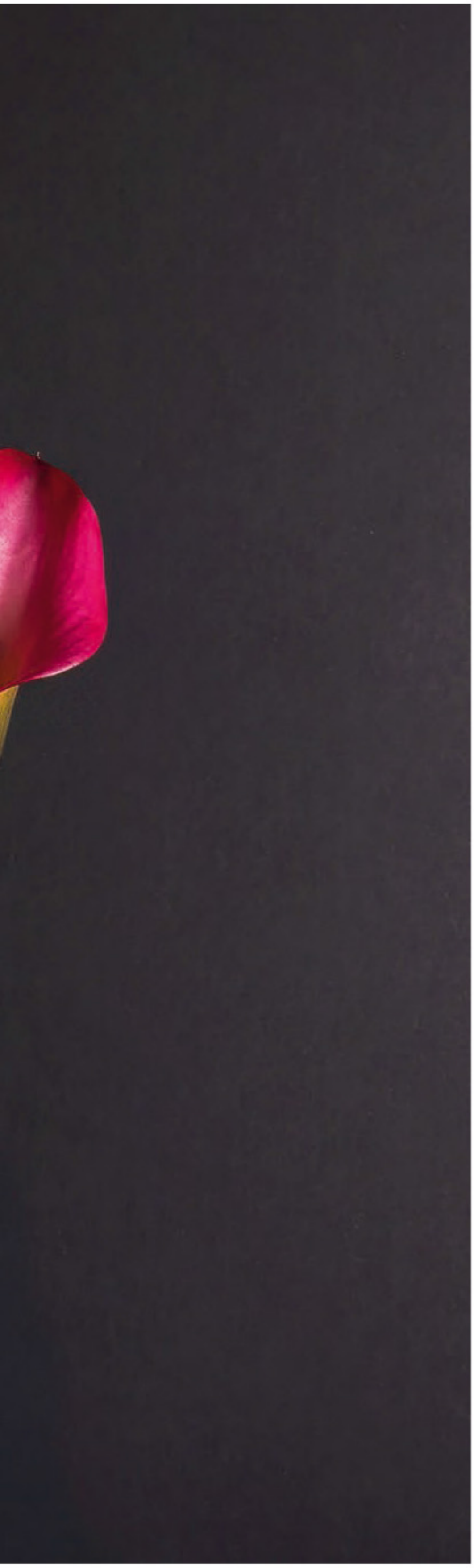
Calla Lily Love
by Shauna Hogg

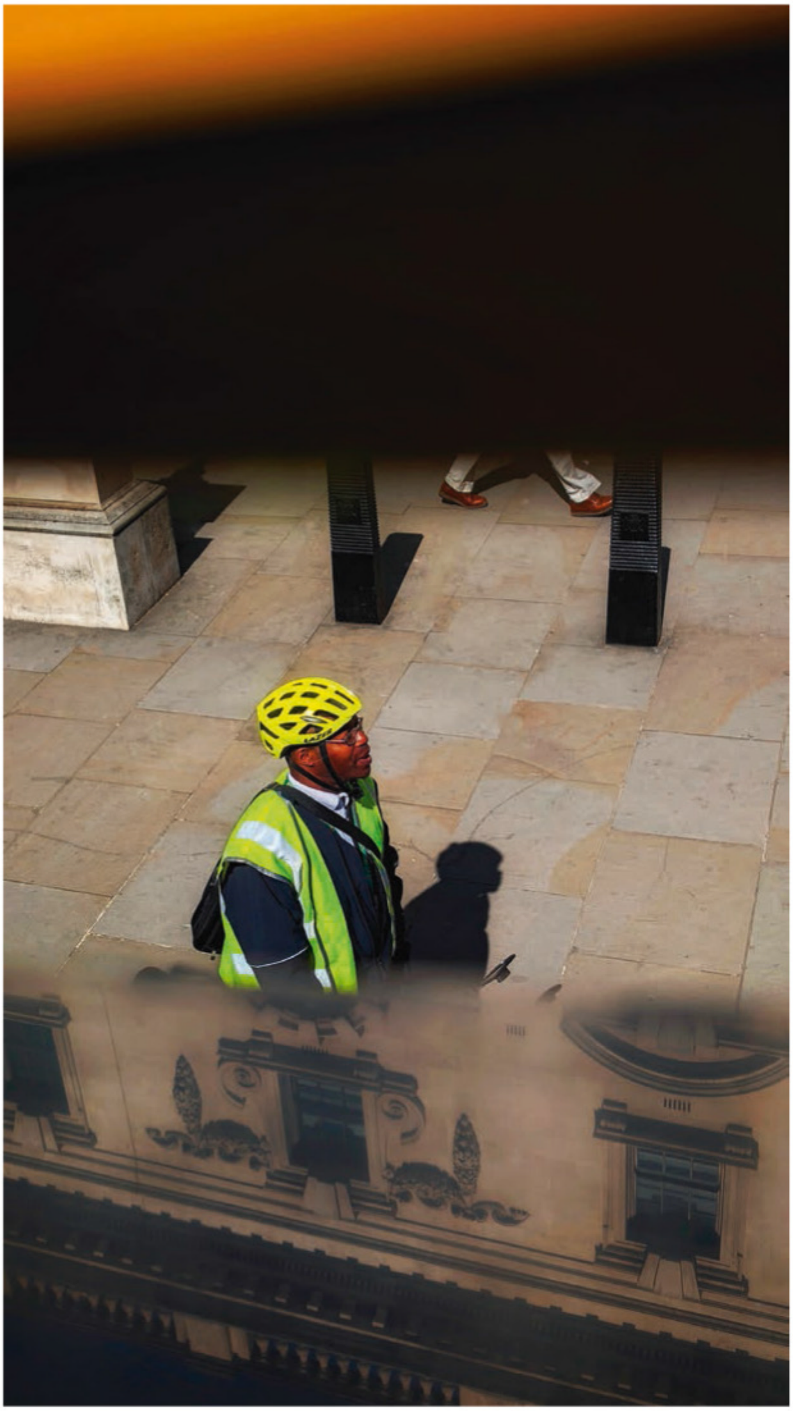
Fujifilm X-H2, XF 56mm F1.2, 1/4sec at f/9.0, ISO 200

'This calla lily was reduced in a local garden centre. It was wilting badly, but still had two beautiful blooms. I took it home, trimmed it and positioned it in front of some black card, messed around getting the right composition and used my portable blow-up lights for some drama.'

Instagram: @shauna_p_photography







A Moment of Urban Juxtaposition

by David Wilson

Google Pixel 8 Pro, 1/2370sec at f/1.7, ISO 19, 25mm, zoomed in (smartphone 35mm equivalent)

‘Protest-induced Parliament Square traffic: I photographed a frustrated cyclist from an open-top bus. Architecture reflects nicely in the bus’s metal railing, while the yellow handrail frames and separates. A background pedestrian with smart footwear enhances the urban context. Using the Google Pixel 8 Pro’s zoom lens allowed this tighter compressed framing, unlike my preferred Ricoh GR III’s fixed focal length.’

Instagram: @cocopops_at_midnight

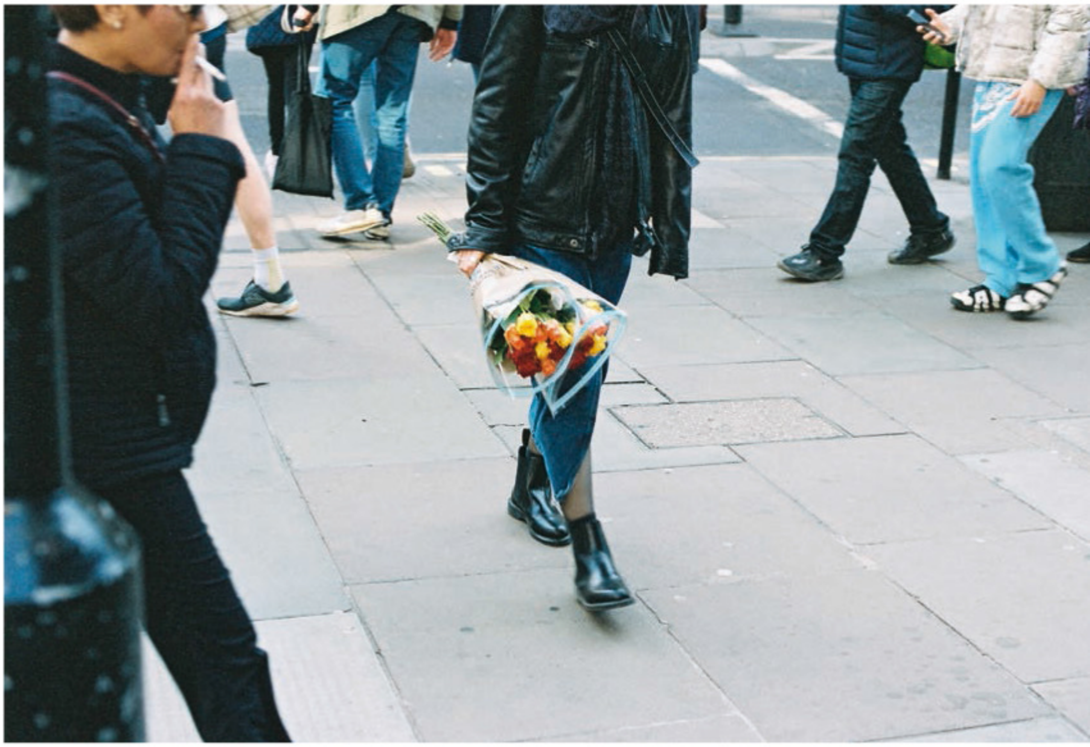
It's good to share

The Little Things
by Tangi Chow

Nikon FM3A, 50mm f/1.4, Kodak Portra 400 (@200)

'I often look at people's hands when I'm out shooting; either holding hands, crossing them in their backs or whatever they are holding, a cigarette, a book, a balloon and more often than not, a bouquet of flowers.'

Instagram: @point.and.click.photography



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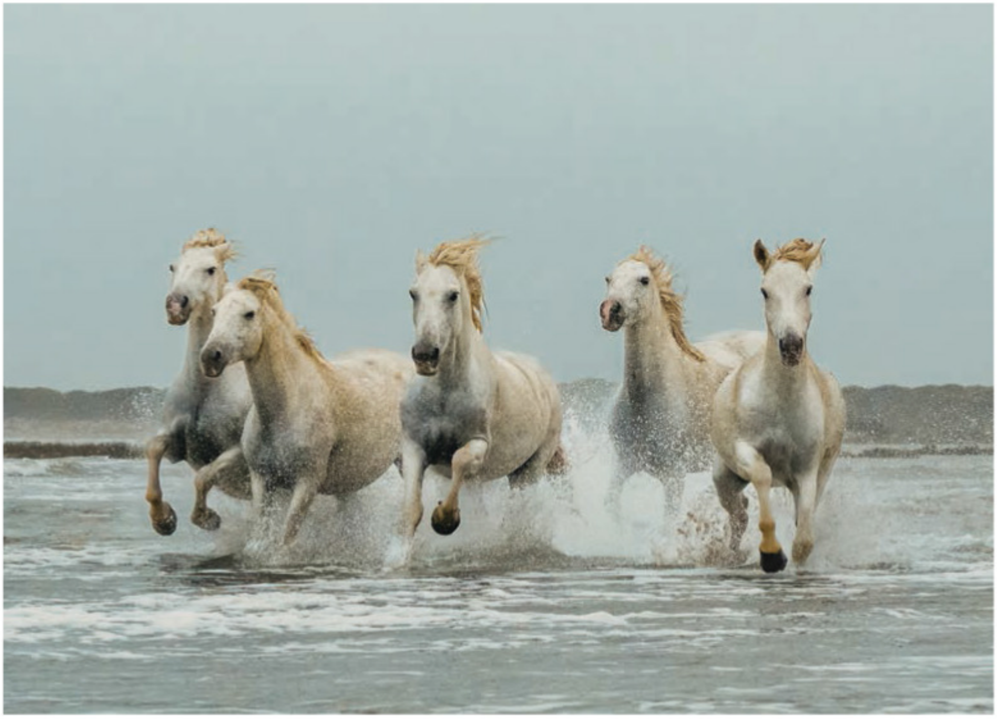

Les Cavaliers de l'Ecume (Riders of the Foam)
by Melanie Sharp

Sony A7R IV, Tamron 50-400mm, 1/640sec at f/5.6, ISO 2500

'This photo was taken in the Camargue, France, after a particularly unseasonal spell of wet, stormy weather. It was supposed to be a shoot on the beach with a gorgeous sunset – but there was no beach, just water and waves everywhere. The horses loved crashing through the waves and so did we. It made for a very unusual shoot and some fantastic images.'

Instagram: @melaniesharpphotography
Facebook: melaniesharpphotography

Want to see your pictures here? Simply share them with our Instagram or Facebook communities using the hashtag **#appicoftheweek**. Or you can email your best shot to us at **ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk**. See page 3 for how to find us.

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ALL PICTURES © NICOLO AIELLO

Sicily on film

Documentary-style photographer Nicolo Aiello shares the inspiration behind his emotive Sicilian street shots, which earned him a top-three spot in our UK Film Photographer of the Year competition. **Jade Burrell** finds out more

Our inaugural UK Film Photographer of the Year competition, run in collaboration with Analogue Wonderland, Kodak, and Ricoh Imaging, showcased an incredible range of talent from across the country. From street scenes to abstract compositions, the entries celebrated the richness and diversity of film as a medium, highlighting both established and emerging photographers. It provided a platform for a variety of voices and styles, pushing the boundaries of film photography.

Among the standout entries was Nicolo Aiello's expressive documentary-style photography from Sicily, earning him a well-deserved second place. His work captured the essence of Sicilian culture, offering a unique perspective on everyday life. Nicolo was awarded £100 worth of film, £100 worth of developing and scanning services, and a limited-edition Pentax T-shirt.

Born in Sicily, Nicolo Aiello has always embraced a variety of creative interests, with music being his first passion. Throughout his life, he has lived in several cities such as Rome, Los Angeles, and across the UK, and his journey eventually led him to photography. 'I started my photography journey five years ago during the pandemic while living in Scotland,' he explains. 'My background is in music until I found myself losing inspiration. Photography has become my way of preserving moments, analysing my surroundings, and engaging in a silent dialogue with myself through the lens. It's almost like therapy.'

A documentary approach

Nicolo's photographic style leans towards documentary-style storytelling, capturing candid and compelling moments in everyday life. 'I mostly walk around and try to find stories if I don't have a specific project I'm working on,' he says. He finds inspiration in the unnoticed details of daily routines and fleeting expressions. His passion for music extends into his photography, as he enjoys working with musicians and photographing live performances.

Opposite page: Cefalù

Left: Splash

Clockwise from top left:

Il telo bianco

Dusting off

Santa Rosalia

Persiane

Stigghiola

Observers

'Capturing those moments of expression and energy during a live concert is incredibly fulfilling.'

For the competition, Nicolo submitted a series of images taken in Sicily, spanning from the vibrant streets of Palermo to the quiet coastal charm of Cefalù. These photos looked into Sicilian culture, showing both city and countryside life. 'Cefalù is a lovely and picturesque village by the sea,' Nicolo explains. 'I love walking around and capturing moments of daily life; time slows down there, and you can simply feel the warm sun and a peaceful breeze.'

Nicolo's other photographs document the Festino of Santa Rosalia, a vibrant religious and folkloric celebration held annually in Palermo on 14 July. The festival is an explosion of colour and energy, and Nicolo's images reflect this dynamic spirit. However, when Nicolo first considered submitting his photographs, he hesitated. 'At first, I wasn't sure whether to classify them as anything more than "just" beautiful moments,' he admits. He had originally planned to work on more intense projects in Sicily, focusing on wildfires and drugs.

But after receiving positive feedback from friends and colleagues, Nicolo realised that the simplicity of his images resonated more than he had anticipated. 'I suddenly understood that those moments were pulling me back to my roots, my childhood, my old habits, home.'

Creative choices

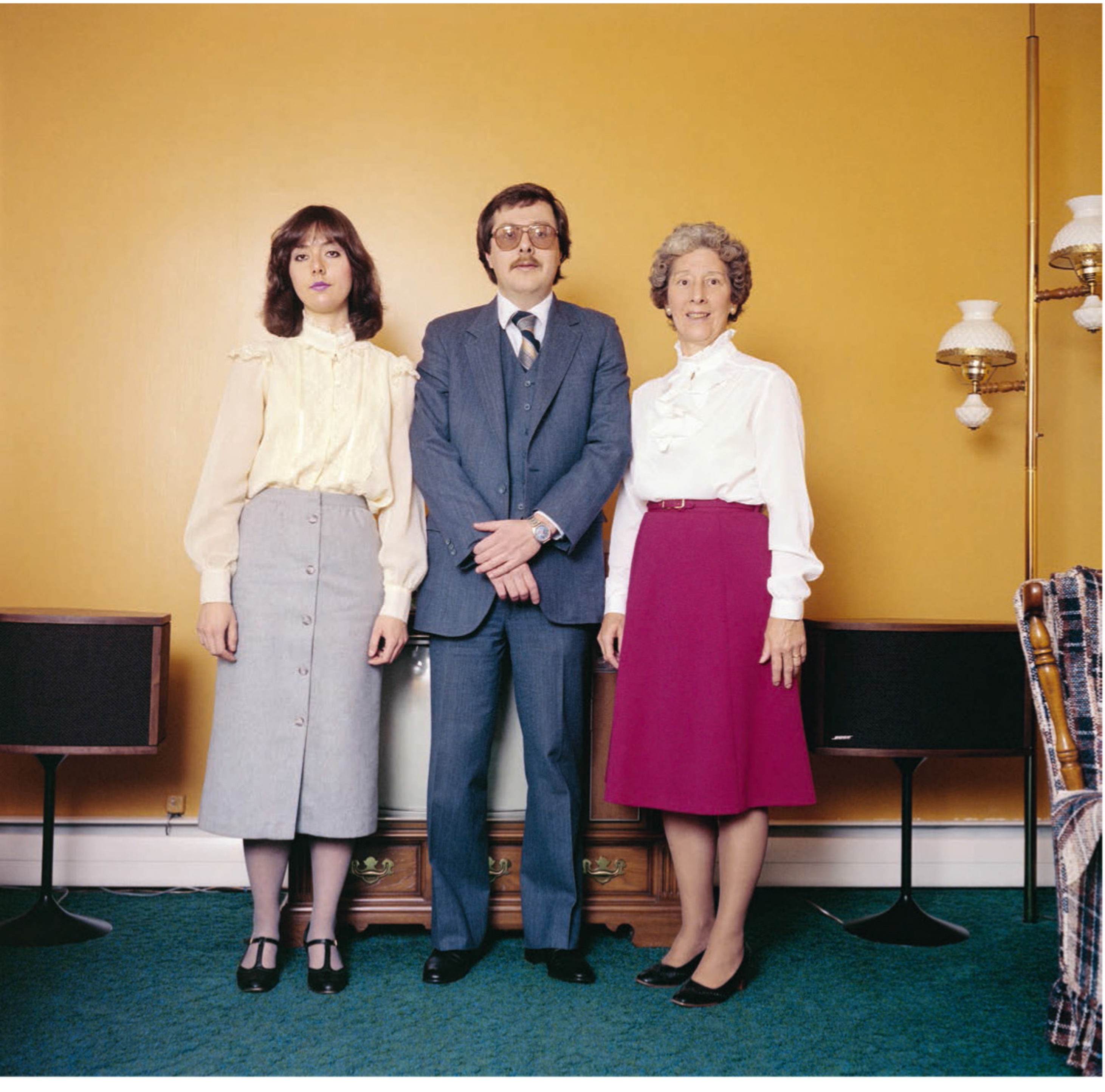
Nicolo trusted his instincts when selecting the images for the competition, choosing not to second-guess himself. 'I submitted them without overthinking,' he says. 'I just wanted to share those moments with more people, especially because they feel the most genuine to me.' He chose not to overcomplicate things, letting the images speak for themselves.

For Nicolo, photography is not just about taking pictures; it's about creating images that hold meaning for him. He wants his work to reflect real moments and personal connections. 'I want to build on that, exploring wherever the camera may take me, and hopefully create a complete story to share.' He aims to capture what feels authentic and relatable, focusing on stories that matter to him.

Although he usually works with digital photography, for this series Nicolo turned to film photography for a more tactile and nostalgic experience. 'The tactile process of film, from the negatives to the prints, offered the romantic experience I was craving.'

For his competition entry, he used the fully mechanical Leica M-A and Leica M-P, both 35mm rangefinder cameras known for their precision and build quality, paired with the Leica 50mm Summilux lens. He shot on a variety of film stocks, including Kodak Gold 200, Portra 160, Vision3 50D, and CineStill 800T.

To see more of Nicolo's work, visit his website at www.nicoloaiello.com or follow him on Instagram at @nicoloaiello23



ALL IMAGES ©THE ANONYMOUS PROJECT / LEE SHULMAN

To the nines

The latest book from the Anonymous Project archives celebrates the colourful world of mid-century fashion. Its author, Lee Shulman, tells **Amy Davies** more about it

Back in 2017, Lee Shulman bought a random box of Kodachrome slides. Finding himself taken by the possible stories of the subjects in the photos, he created an ongoing and ever-growing archive which he dubbed The Anonymous Project.

Since then, he has created many books, exhibitions and projects using the archive as source material. This new volume concentrates on the world of fashion, clothing and how it plays an integral part to all of our lives.

More than 200 full-colour and vibrant images are presented across its pages, showing its anonymous subjects at home, at the beach, on vacation, working, partying and everything in between.

The images have mostly never been seen before, certainly not by the wider public. Most will have never been printed before, existing only as long-forgotten Kodachrome slides sitting in an attic.

Keen to find out more about this book, and the latest from the archives, I spoke to Lee for an insight.

AP: Why this book, and why now?
LS: I've been asked to do it for a long time, and I think maybe the fact that I kept being asked to do it, is why I decided not to. I was busy working on other projects, such as the collaborations I've done recently with Omar Victor Diop (the book *Being There*) and Martin Parr (the film *I Am Martin Parr*). Whenever I've given interviews about the Anonymous Project archive, I'm always asked, what's different about pictures from back then, compared to now.

I always say not much has changed. The only thing I ever used to say is people used to dress better. I obviously love the fashions that are in these images – I think they are fantastic. They tell a lot about society and the politics of the time. I was amazed by how much colour and fantasy there was in the clothing. These are ordinary people from everyday families. In doing the research, I also found some of the clothing ads at the time. I think that kind of made the book really happen for me.

I think people think of photography from the '50s and '60s as predominantly black & white, we don't think a lot about colour. Back then, colour was really the domain of amateur photography, rather than black & white, which seemed professional; whereas now it's kind of switched the other way around. I remember showing the images for the first time and people were like, wow, these clothes and the colours, and the designs are amazing. I would say, yeah, that's from 70 years ago and people think that's crazy.

These are all family photos. Some of them seem almost professional, but there's something more emotional about them. Fashion can seem very cold in a world that we don't have access to. With my projects, I try to bring those subjects back into the domain of the everybody and the ordinary.

AP: Most of the family photos we take now live, and quite probably die, on our phones. So maybe they will never be found again. Whereas there's physical traces of these photos just waiting to be found by you. Isn't that exciting?
LS: All these photos come from Kodachrome slides. It's interesting in terms of they're not, and never were, actual printed pictures. It's really extraordinary, because I see the image for the first time printed in the finished book – before then I've only seen them on screens. Kodachrome slides were meant to be projected. These images were an extraordinary technology of the time, 35mm Kodachrome slides were so beautiful. This is why I think that the quality of the images are so stunning, compared to what we're used to.

I often had a reaction of people going, wow, these images are such good quality. You know, what do you do to them? I don't do anything – I think that's

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what's incredible is that this technology of the Kodachrome slides that came in in the '40s and '50s and '60s, and kind of slightly '70s and died out in the '80s, really, was a big part of the work. I love the idea of having the original images. In photography, we talk about multiples and reproduction. It's really interesting to see them almost reborn for the first time.

AP: Why do you think that these photos were abandoned? Do you think it's because some of them are what people might have considered bad composition at the time – for example looking away from the camera, not smiling, and so on?

LS: No, the sad thing is, actually, I think some of them are beautifully framed. The technology kind of ran out, so people didn't project images any more. And then we went to negatives and people started printing their photos and having photo albums. Basically, they just got forgotten and put in boxes. To actually look at a slide, you'd have to put the projector on, darken the windows, put a screen up. That was 'an event' at the time. That kind of died out.

Sometimes I have trouble with the word 'amateur' because I kind of think taking a photo at the time wasn't as easy as it is today, so people genuinely were good photographers.

What's become interesting is that idea of the imperfections. That's the beauty of this type of photography, it's sometimes the imperfections that some might see, but to me, are more emotional, they create a reality, they're honest. Framing an image at the time was pretty haphazard, whereas nowadays we can reframe and recrop everything as we want.

Often the photographer knows the subject, so they're taking a picture of a family member or somebody they know. There's a direct emotional contact and that's really special. A lot of photographers would love to have that intimacy.

Usually, there's so much construct in fashion photography. Taking that away and looking at fashion in this respect, almost makes fashion a little bit more digestible, I think, and also more acceptable and more accessible. I think it's always had the domain of being very elitist and very, very much for the happy few. I've always felt that photography is the people's medium, therefore it's good to go back to that.

AP: Tell us about the process of finding these pictures in the archive

LS: I remember my graphic designer, she started freaking out saying, 'please don't send me thousands and thousands, I'll just be lost.'

I did a sort of pre-edit, giving her fewer images because the archive is so big, and we started going through it and doing the chapters with the different designs and different types of clothing. I put in a lot of images that meant a lot to me as well, ones that I could relate to and that I felt were stunning.

It's also nice to see the advertisements, too. There was this kind of aspirational idea of post-war America and the UK a bit as well. I love the graphic designs of some of the images, and some of them match so well [to the adverts] and tell us a lot

about how people were sold and wore a fashion.

That became really a thread through the book, they kind of became the chapters of the book, in some respects. It's difficult to do a fashion book without any text in it, but it's great to let people just kind of wander through it and make their own mind up.

Also people made their own clothes. There's a lot of curtains ripped off walls and things like that. What's amazing is the quality of the clothes themselves was so extraordinary. We live in such a fast fashion world, and throw-away fashion really is pretty scary – these people had fewer clothes, but better-made clothes.

It'd be great if we could go back to some of these fashions. Maybe we will – we're all listening to vinyls, and we're all going so retro and vintage these days, so maybe I'm ahead of the game.

At the time, post-war, it was a big celebration, they came out of the darkest period. I think a lot of what I see is a real celebration of life and desire not to take themselves too seriously.

TEXAS 72
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AP: Is your graphic designer in charge of the sequencing or is it a collaboration?

LS: I've worked with Agnés Dahan for all my books. Whether you're a photographer, artist or whatever, when you work through a book and you have a graphic designer, they are absolutely the unsung heroes of making books, like the designers of a lot of these clothes.

You design a book a bit like a piece of clothing. You make sure all the parts fit. It's definitely a collaboration with someone I hold very dear.

Sometimes I'm so immersed in all my images, sometimes they will take something out and show you something and you see it from the outside for the first time. That's a wonderful way to step back and let someone else show you a vision of your work. It takes a year to do a book for me, so it's a long period. To make sure that the visual narrative works very well, especially when you have a book that's just visuals.

The image on its own means absolutely nothing – it's the sequencing of images that makes it work. I think editing is the basis of all photography and film. It's an editor's medium.

AP: Are most of the pictures in the book American? Some of them look distinctly British, but without captions it's hard to say for sure.

LS: If you say it looks British, it probably is British. The archive is mainly American, because the technology of the Kodachrome slides came from America. But there are some great UK ones. There's a double spread of a group of friends by a car with cups of tea in their hands, for example.

AP: Are you still finding boxes of slides? Where do you find them?

LS: I buy a lot, mostly online. People send them to me, too. It's lovely that the project has become this kind of big community of people who support the project and send me slides as well. I'm not saying that all of them are very good,

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unfortunately. It's a non-stop growing collection. The worst thing for me is sometimes I finish a book and then a box arrives and the images are so great. I know that I will only ever do one batch of books, I am very keen on not repeating myself. That was the thing about this book. I waited. I think it's the largest amateur collection in the world of images. I got to that point where I had the material to do a book like this because you can't do it straight away. That's why I resisted doing it in the beginning – I waited until the collection was big enough that we had the material.

AP: How big is the archive at the moment, and how is it organised?

LS: Well, I know how much I've received, which is getting close to a million slides. There's about 35,000, which is tiny compared to what I've received. We keep everything, but generally I work around that 35,000 images that are the kind of core of the archives, so I'd remove things like empty landscapes, completely out of focus shots and so on.

We have them in a database, but we haven't got them keyworded or anything like that. Which means if we're looking for images, then we have to go through everything – but I don't think you can have keywords for emotional responses. It's really important to reassess the images and re-go through them and confront yourself again with them. I feel sometimes how I feel about images is so different afterwards. It's actually very manual, the way we work here.

AP: Do you ever get people recognising themselves or a family member in the pictures?

LS: It's never happened. You have to remember that the photographer population at that time is so tiny. It's not like today where we're taking billions. It was really a rare thing that obviously belonged a lot to the middle classes who could afford it and could do it.

Even though I might say I have a million in the archive, you have to remember that today alone over a billion photos will be taken. It would be wonderful if I could get some backstories, but then again, it's so beautiful not knowing who these people are. Some people say, 'that's just like my uncle. I have a photo like that.' It's nice that people feel that the photos belong to them a little bit. I've always said it's kind of like it belongs to everybody, this work.

AP: What do you think the reaction to the book will be when it comes out?

LS: Generally the reception I get is incredibly positive. And then the people who work in the fashion world love it, too. I've always had incredibly positive reactions to all my work because it's so joyful. And it shows us, especially now, the positive part of living a life and the importance of family and friends. The idea that we all belong to this one family, which is something I've really had as a thread for everything, it kind of shows the universality of everything. I'm excited to see how people react.

Dressed to impress
The Anonymous Project

Dressed to Impress: The Anonymous Project – Mid Century Fashion
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Once again, AP is championing the best in image-making with the launch of this year's Amateur Photographer of the Year award (APOY), where the best non-professional photographers in the world compete over ten rounds to win some fantastic prizes.

This year, we are excited to announce the return of Camera Centre UK as our headline sponsor, with a £500 voucher for the winner of each round – and a £1,000 voucher for the overall winner. Our other sponsors are DxO, Bob Books and ViewSonic. Together, they are giving away more than £20,000 worth of vouchers, software and products. In addition, we are excited to reveal that there will be a touring exhibition and book featuring the winners of each round and a selection of runner-up images.

We are also pleased to announce that all our prizes – whether software or Camera Centre vouchers – are available to every entrant, wherever in the world they may be based*.

You might submit images to only one or two rounds, or you might set yourself the challenge of entering them all – it's up to you. Once again, we are also running our Young APOY competition, open to photographers aged between 13 and 21 by the closing date. And we are delighted once more to encourage camera club members to enter and accumulate points for their society.

Turn over for details on how to enter Round One

To enter, visit
www.amateurphotographer.com/apoy

Camera Centre UK

Based in South Wales, Camera Centre UK is a family business with a highly knowledgeable team that prides itself on providing first-class service to its customers and stocks a vast array of the latest digital cameras, camcorders, drones, lenses and photographic accessories both online and at the flagship store in Cardiff. Thanks to its part-exchange service, it also has a huge selection of used equipment including a wide range of film cameras and lenses, as well as many exciting hidden gems. Visit www.cameracentreuk.com

DxO

DxO PhotoLab delivers outstanding image quality with its powerful RAW engine, intelligent corrections, precise optical calibration, and advanced AI-driven tools like DeepPRIME noise reduction. DxO FilmPack complements PhotoLab by bringing the timeless aesthetic of film photography to the digital workflow. It integrates seamlessly with PhotoLab or can be used as a standalone application. Visit shop.dxo.com/en

Bob Books

Bob Books is one of the UK's most well-respected firms for designing and printing photo books. Choose from an exceptional range of premium photo papers and binding styles. Through its online bookshop, Bob Books supports photographers by ensuring they can self-publish and showcase their work on a platform that benefits them. Visit www.bobbooks.co.uk/amateur-photographer-of-the-year-awards-2025

ViewSonic

With a commitment to innovation and forwardthinking, ViewSonic offers complete hardware and software solutions, including monitors, projectors, pen displays, LED displays, interactive displays, and software suites. Its ColorPro monitor range, designed to for photographers, videographers and other artists, offers unparalleled colour accuracy and award-winning ergonomic design for outstanding visual performance. Visit www.viewsonic.com

*PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY WINNERS OF CAMERA CENTRE VOUCHERS WHO LIVE OUTSIDE THE UK WILL BE LIABLE FOR THEIR COUNTRY'S IMPORT DUTIES AND COSTS

Amateur Photograp

Your chance to enter the UK's most prestigious com

Round one
Black & White

A black & white image has a certain something that colour photography simply can't emulate, and the pursuit of a great monochrome picture is something many photographers devote their whole lives to. The joy of this category is that it is completely open – any subject goes, because the medium is equally stunning whether you shoot landscapes, portraits, abstracts, or go down the classic route of street photography. It's always worth shooting with a conversion to black & white in mind – don't make it an afterthought.

Your guest judge

Dimpy Bhalotia is an internationally awarded photographer, renowned for her powerful, pioneering images. Her instinctive timing, original perspective, and emotionally resonant storytelling have inspired audiences around the world. Her work has appeared in the *Washington Post, Forbes, The Guardian, National Geographic* and BBC News, among others. See more at www.dimpybhalotia.com

Plan your APOY 2025 year

Below is a list of all this year's rounds, including when they open, when they close and the dates the results will be announced in AP

THEME	OPENS PHOTOCROWD & AP	CLOSES	SHORTLIST	RESULTS
Black & White	6 May 2025	26 May 2025	11 June	26 June 2025
People & Portraits	27 May 2025	23 Jun 2025	9 July	24 July 2025
Close-ups & Details	24 June 2025	21 Jul 2025	6 August	21 Aug 2025
Landscapes	22 July 2025	18 Aug 2025	3 September	18 Sep 2025
Celebrating Colour	19 August 2025	15 Sep 2025	1 October	16 Oct 2025
Night & Low Light	16 September 2025	13 Oct 2025	29 October	13 Nov 2025
Animal Kingdom	14 October 2025	10 Nov 2025	26 November	11 Dec 2025
Movement	11 November 2025	8 Dec 2025	23 December	8 Jan 2026
Urban Life	9 December 2025	5 Jan 2026	21 Jan 2026	5 Feb 2026
Open	6 January 2026	2 Feb 2026	18 Feb 2026	5 Mar 2026

YOUR FREE ENTRY CODE

Enter the code below via Photocrowd to get one free entry to Round One - Black & White

APOY11632221

Paula Green won the black & white round last year with her outstanding image of Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro

© PAULA GREEN

To enter, just

ALL ABOUT APOY 2025

The camera club award

Do you belong to a camera club or photographic society? You can accumulate precious points for your society when you enter Amateur Photographer of the Year. And after all of the ten rounds have been completed, the club that has gained the most points will win a superb high-performance 4K projector from ViewSonic, the leading projector supplier. In addition, the individual member of the winning club who contributed the most points to their club's overall tally, will take home a first-class ViewSonic monitor as their prize.

her of the Year

petition for amateur photographers

£20,000 worth of prizes

visit **www.amateurphotographer.com/apoy**

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The Young APOY award

Now a well-established part of APOY, the Young Photographer of the Year competition encourages our up-and-coming snappers. Entrants should be 21 years old or younger by the competition's final closing date of 2 February 2026. All the categories are the same as for the main contest – simply select the Young APOY option on Photocrowd when you upload your images. Entry is free. Each category winner receives voucher prizes from DxO and Bob Books, with the overall winner after ten rounds receiving a £500 voucher to spend at Camera Centre UK*.

APOY 2025

In association with

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DXO For the passionate photographer.

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What you win

APOY prizes

The winner of each round of APOY receives a voucher for £500 to spend at Camera Centre UK*, plus free DxO PhotoLab and FilmPack licences worth £340, and a £50 voucher for Bob Books. The two runners-up in each round will receive a free DxO Nik Collection licence worth £146 and a £25 voucher for Bob Books. The overall winner after ten rounds wins a £1,000 voucher to spend at Camera Centre UK and a £100 voucher for Bob Books.

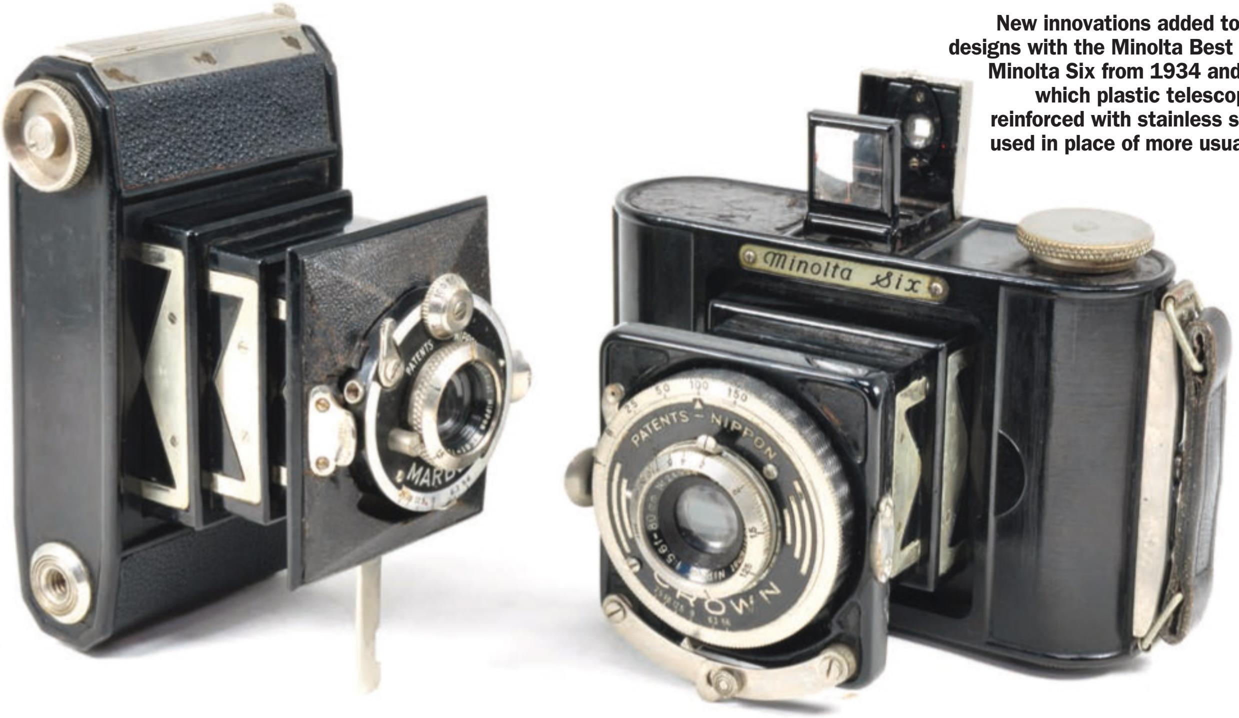
Young APOY prizes

The winner of each round of Young APOY receives free DxO PhotoLab and FilmPack licences worth £340, and a £50 voucher for Bob Books. The two runners-up in each round will receive a free DxO Nik Collection licence worth £146 and a £25 voucher for Bob Books. The overall winner of Young APOY will receive a £500 voucher to spend at Camera Centre UK* and a £100 voucher for Bob Books.

Camera club prizes

The winning club receives a ViewSonic 4K projector, and a monitor for the highest scoring member of that club.

*PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY WINNERS OF CAMERA CENTRE VOUCHERS WHO LIVE OUTSIDE THE UK WILL BE LIABLE FOR THEIR COUNTRY'S IMPORT DUTIES AND COSTS

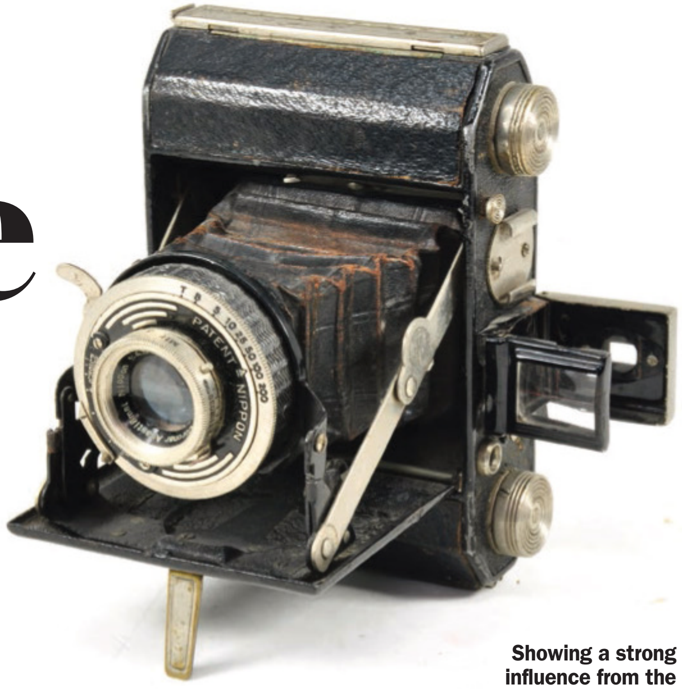


New innovations added to common designs with the Minolta Best (left) and Minolta Six from 1934 and 1935, in which plastic telescopic boxes reinforced with stainless steel were used in place of more usual bellows

ALL PICTURES © JOHN WADE UNLESS OTHERWISE CREDITED

FILM STARS

The nine lives of Minolta



Showing a strong influence from the German Zeiss Ikon Ikonta cameras of the 1930s, a Semi-Minolta I from 1934

John Wade details the unexpected and innovative cameras of a sometimes overlooked manufacturer

In 1928, Japanese economics and sociology student turned businessman Kazuo Tashima formed a company called Nichi-Doku Shashinki Shoten. Its purpose was to produce cameras that were inspired by the import of mostly German models and redesigned for the Japanese home market. The first camera was a 127 roll film model called the Nifcalette. In 1931 the company name was changed to Mechanism, Instruments, Optics and Lenses by Tashima, which was probably considered a bit of a mouthful to put on a camera. So, using initials from the company name, the brand became Minolta.

In the years ahead, the company name changed but the brand remained the same, as the Minolta name became associated with a versatile and innovative range of cameras covering 16mm, 35mm, 127 and 120 film formats in models that included coupled rangefinder, subminiature, single lens reflex (SLR), twin lens reflex (TLR), compacts, 126/110 Instamatic-type cameras, disc cameras, APS and digital. Those, then, represented Minolta's nine lives. Here are examples of significant cameras from each of them.

Minolta-35 inspired by, but not a copy of, the Leica

1st life: 35mm rangefinder cameras

CAMERA: Minolta-35 Model II (1953)

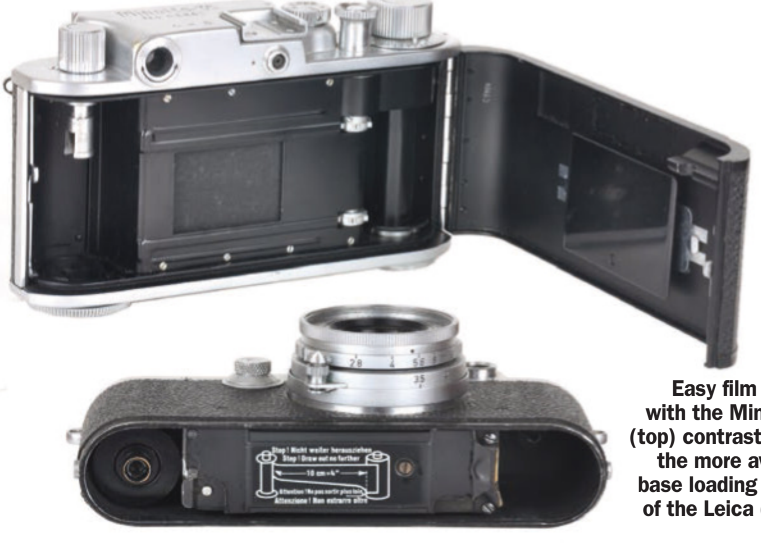
GUIDE PRICE TODAY: £175-200

Leica screw-lens cameras were at their peak in the mid-1950s, but they were expensive. The Minolta-35 wasn't an exact copy of the Leica, but the design definitely drew inspiration from its German cousin – and it was much less expensive, with several models offering slightly different specifications. The first cameras, released in 1947, used a 24x32mm film format, but with the launch of this improved second model, the frame size changed to 24x34mm.

The focal plane shutter, using a Leica-like dual control system for slow and fast speeds, runs 1-1/500sec. Improvements over Leicas of the time include combining the viewfinder and rangefinder in one eyepiece, plus improved film loading via a conventional back opening as opposed to the fiddly Leica system of loading through the base. The standard lens is a 45mm f/2.8 Super Rokkor.

Usability today

Rokkor lenses made for the Minolta-35 can give their Leica equivalents a run for their money quality-wise, but the range of focal lengths is small. Luckily, the camera uses a 39mm mount, making it compatible with the vast range of Leica screw-mount lenses, as well as the budget-priced 39mm mount Russian lenses made for Fed and Zorki Leica copies. Overall, the Minolta-35 gives a Leica-like experience, with better ease of use at less than half the cost.



Easy film loading with the Minolta-35 (top) contrasted with the more awkward base loading system of the Leica (below)

The Minolta Autocord twin lens reflex, its design influenced by the Rolleiflex

COURTESY OF THE REAL CAMERA COMPANY

2nd life: twin lens reflexes

CAMERA: Minolta Autocord (1955)

GUIDE PRICE TODAY: £150-200

The genesis of most small roll film TLRs lay in the much-copied Rolleiflex, first seen in 1928. Minolta's entry into the market came in 1937 with the Rollei look-alike Minoltaflex, one of Japan's earliest TLRs. By 1955, the Autocord, while still styled along Rolleiflex lines, very much trod its own path.

Several models were made, including versions incorporating a 220 film capability and built-in CdS meter. But all shared similar basic specs: crank film wind with automatic shutter tensioning and frame counter, with shutter speeds of 1-1/400sec (later increased to 1/500sec). To these Minolta added a focusing lever that protrudes from the lens board from where it moves radially to move the twin lenses back and forth in tandem.

Usability today

The 120 roll film size is still readily available and the quality of the Rokkor lens, whose design was inspired by the Zeiss Tessar, is superb. The Autocord makes an excellent introduction to medium format film photography.

3rd life: 16mm subminiature cameras

CAMERA: Minolta-16 (1957)

GUIDE PRICE TODAY: £15-20

Time was when it was thought that 16mm was going to replace 35mm. Consequently, 16mm cameras of all kinds proliferated during the 1950s and into the 1960s. In its time, the Minolta-16, in various guises and colours that included silver, red, black, blue, green and gold, was one of the more famous examples.

The camera is small and box-shaped. Pulling one end extends the body, uncapping the lens and revealing the shutter release. Speeds and apertures are set by two thumbwheels protruding from the end of the body. Early cameras use f/3.5 lenses and shutters speeded 1/25-1/100sec. Later models added an f/2.8 lens and increased shutter speeds to 1/30-1/500sec. The image size on 16mm film was originally 10x14mm, later increased to 12x17mm. Upgrades of the basic model continued into the early 1960s.

Open and closed: the Minolta 16 subminiature camera

Usability today

Minolta 16 film is still available from specialist dealers or, if you are really dedicated, you can buy 16mm cine film and load it into the Minolta 16 cartridges used by the camera. But truthfully, this one is more of a collector's item than a working camera.

4th life: 126 & 110 cameras

CAMERAS: Autopak 800 & 110 Zoom SLR

GUIDE PRICE TODAY: £20-25 & £15-20

In 1963, Kodak introduced the Instamatic system, a series of simple-to-use cameras whose film was in a new drop-in 126 size Kodapak cartridge that shot 28x28mm images. In 1972, Kodak did it again, this time with the Pocket Instamatic series that used 16mm film in cartridges to shoot images 13x17mm. Camera makers around the world produced their own versions to take both types of film, with Minolta's offerings sometimes taking different routes to others.

The Autopak 800, produced in 1969, was the top of the range of half-a-dozen 126 film Autopak models. It offers a 38mm f/2.8 Rokkor lens, coupled rangefinder and CdS meter which provides automation, based on two manually selected speeds of 1/90sec for daylight shooting or 1/45sec for flash. The camera also features a built-in clockwork motor drive wound by a large knob on one end of the body, and a facility that allows a flashcube to be left in place to automatically rotate and fire only when light levels demand it.

When it came to the 110 film system, Minolta introduced the world's first 110 SLR. The Mark I version, launched in 1976, resembles a traditional 110 camera with a reflex viewfinder on top and a fixed 25-50mm zoom lens with a macro facility. The camera offers aperture priority with f/4.5-16 selected by a knob beside the lens. In 1979, Minolta restyled the camera to make the Mark II version in a new shape more like a small 35mm SLR.

Minolta Autopak 800, one of the better cameras made to use 126 size film cartridges

Minolta's two SLRs that used 110 film: the Mark I (left) and Mark II

Usability today

Today, 110 film is still available, 126 film less so, making both Minolta's 110 SLRs the better bet for users.

5th life: single lens reflexes

CAMERA: Minolta X-1

GUIDE PRICE TODAY: £150-250

Minolta's SLR journey began in 1958 with the introduction of the SR-2 and progressed through a highly respected series of manual and auto exposure models, with names prefixed by 'ST' and 'X' until, in 1985, the introduction of the Minolta 7000, the world's first body-integral autofocus SLR. Along the way, in 1973, the Minolta X-1 arrived, maybe one of the best, and least-known, of the company's cameras.

The X-1, called the XK in America and the XM in Europe, was aimed at the professional market to rival the then current Nikon F2 and Canon F-1. It features a solid state, electronically governed exposure system. Aperture priority comes with Minolta's MC Rokkor lenses, or stop-down metering with older Rokkor lenses. For shutter priority, the focal plane shutter offers speeds of 16-1/2,000sec, with a manual speed of 1/100sec. Interchangeable focusing screens cover 11 different types, while interchangeable viewfinders include plain, match-needle, high magnification and waist-level. Unfortunately, Minolta didn't have the marketing firepower to drive the camera forward and it never achieved the success it deserved.

Usability today

The X-1's biggest drawback, compared to its rivals, is its failure to accept a motor drive. Otherwise, it is a rugged, top-quality camera that costs less than its Nikon and Canon rivals, with which it compares extremely favourably.

Minolta XK, the American version of the X-1

Minolta CLE outfit with dedicated flashgun and Rokkor lenses

COURTESY OF LEITZ AUCTION, VIENNA

Leica CL, body made by Minolta, with its two Leitz lenses: 40mm f/2 Summicron-C mounted and 90mm f/4 Elmar

6th life: compact cameras

CAMERA: Minolta CLE

GUIDE PRICE TODAY: £800-1,200

In 1972, Minolta and Leitz signed a contract to agree technical co-operation between the two companies. The first result of the collaboration came the following year with a camera that combined the quality of Leitz design with the more cost-productive manufacturing processes of Minolta. It was called the Leitz Minolta CL in Japan and the Leica CL elsewhere.

The CL features the through-the-lens (TTL), match-needle metering system pioneered by Leica in its M5, but in a much more compact body. Although built by Minolta, the camera was sold with two Leitz lenses: a standard 40mm f/2 Summicron-C and a telephoto 90mm f/4 Elmar. Bright frames in the viewfinder give the view for each, alongside a coincident image rangefinder coupled to the focusing. It also accepts most of Leica's M-mount lenses, although those whose rear elements extend back into the body need to be avoided as they can foul the meter sensor that swings up in front of the film prior to exposure.

So what has all this to do with Minolta? Simple: when production of the CL camera ended, Minolta added three Rokkor lenses of its own, squeezed in aperture priority automation and sold it in 1981 as the Minolta CLE.

Usability today

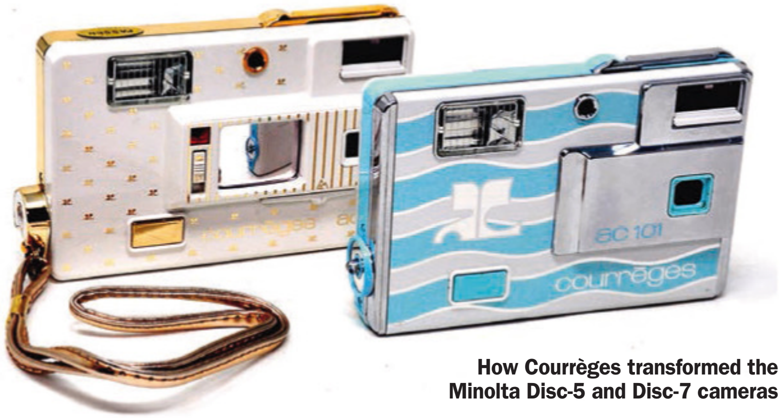
The CLE isn't a compact camera in the usually accepted sense of the word. If you want one of those, consider Minolta's well-specified Hi-matic series. But if you desire something better and more interesting, go for the still very usable and top-quality CLE.

7th life: disc cameras

CAMERAS: Courrèges AC 101 & AC 301

GUIDE PRICE TODAY: £25-35 & £60-80

Minolta Disc-7, one of the best non-Kodak disc cameras



How Courrèges transformed the Minolta Disc-5 and Disc-7 cameras

In 1982, when Kodak launched its new Disc series of cameras, it wasn't long before other manufacturers around the world began tooling up to produce their own versions. Minolta was among them and produced some of the best. They included the Disc-5 and the Disc-7. The first was a simple camera similar to Kodak's first model, the Disc 4000. The second added a macro mode, a self-timer and a telescopic rod that screwed into the side of the body, with a button to fire the shutter over the heads of crowds or held at a suitable distance for a self-portrait reflected in a mirror beside the lens.

In 1983, each of these cameras was utilised by French fashion designer André Courrèges. Under his creative eye, the Disc-5 became the AC 101 with a white body traversed by wavey lines in pastel colours of blue, green, light brown or pink, while the Disc-7 became the AC 301, also with a white body, but with gold fittings and tiny gold stylised versions of the designer's initials distributed around the front.

Usability today

It is still possible to buy outdated disc film. The problem is that processing isn't easy and most disc cameras used early forms of lithium batteries which will probably have died by now, rendering the cameras interesting collector's items, but worthless for the user.

* * *

8th life: APS cameras

CAMERA: Minolta Vectis S-1

GUIDE PRICE TODAY: £20-25

The Advanced Photo System, generally known as APS, which originated in 1996, introduced a new type of film, completely enclosed in a special slimline cassette dropped into a chamber in the base, side or top of the camera. As well as the image, the film also recorded technical data which included instructions to the processor to print the images as 'High Definition' to use the full APS format of 30.2x16.7mm, 'Classic' to crop the image to 25.1x16.7mm, or 'Panoramic' to crop the image to 30.2x9.5mm. Minolta was one of several major manufacturers to take up the idea and run with it, and the Vectis S-1 was one of the company's APS leaders.

This is an SLR, but without a traditional pentaprism viewfinder. In its place, a system of mirrors positions the viewfinder eyepiece at the end of the body, resulting in a smoothly contoured, compact design. The spec also offers 14 segment average metering with optional spot metering, auto and manual exposure, a shutter speeded 30-1/2,000sec and a pop-up flashgun. It incorporates Minolta's own V-lens mount, which means it can't accept other than its own specialised lenses that include a one-of-a-kind 400mm autofocus mirror lens.

Usability today

APS is very much a forgotten format these days, but outdated film can be found at specialist dealers and on eBay. The problem is the processing. It's difficult to find a commercial processor and doing it yourself involves specialised tools to get the film out of the cassette and then to adapt a developing tank to accept a 24mm wide film. APS cameras make interesting collector's items, but for users, they are probably best left alone.

Vectis-S1, a Minolta SLR for APS film

COURTESY OF DAVID GARDNER

The rare 400mm mirror lens made for the Vectis camera

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SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

This year's theme:
Street Life

Scope and Contest Rules:
The competition has two categories.
Single: You may submit one picture based on the theme of 'Street Life'.
Series: You may submit a total of 5-8 pictures as part of a portfolio based on the theme of 'Street Life'.

Photographers may compete in one category only. All entries must be in digital format (camera or scanned film originals) and must not have won a prize in any other competition. AI-generated images and pictures older than 2022 are excluded.

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Email your entry (single image OR series) to: ap.Maestro@kelsey.co.uk. Images must be JPEG and a minimum of 2,000 pixels on the longest side. AP will choose the winners and publish them in a July issue. The first-placed winners will receive a one-year digital subscription to AP and go forward to the International round.

National Maestro winners will also be published on Facebook at the end of June for the EISA Public's Choice competition. Prize for Single and Series winners: €500

EISA Maestro Photo Contest
2025
Street Life

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The winning international photographs will be published in the Sept or Oct issues of all 15 EISA photo magazines/websites. Circumstances permitting, winners will be invited to the EISA Awards ceremony in Sept 2025

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9th life: digital cameras

CAMERA: Minolta Dimage 7

GUIDE PRICE TODAY: £20-35

When the digital age dawned, Minolta played its part in the plethora of digital cameras that proliferated from all comers that packed auto-everything features into cameras the size of a credit card. Things got more interesting when the company turned to a style of camera that bridged the gap between the then very expensive DSLRs and less-expensive compacts.

The Dimage 7 is a kind of quasi-SLR, which uses an electronic viewfinder to simulate the view taken in by the lens. The spec includes shutter priority, aperture priority, program and manual exposure modes, plus autofocus with a macro setting for close focusing down to 25cm. The fixed f/2.8-3.5 Minolta GT lens offers a 35mm equivalent of 28-200mm zoom, and images from the 5.2MP sensor can be recorded on CompactFlash cards in JPG, TIFF and RAW formats. To conserve power, the screen on the back automatically switches off as the camera is raised to the eye, when the electronic viewfinder springs into action, and vice versa. Among its features, there's a video option, pop-up flash and choice of shooting modes such as portrait, night, sport and more.

Usability today

The Dimage 7's 5.2MP sensor might seem primitive by today's standards, but it can still turn out a good A4 image with a modicum of interpolation in Photoshop. The 1.8in LCD screen is also small compared to today's offerings, but adequate. The camera runs on four AA batteries, so there is no fear of a dying lithium battery in an outdated and hard-to-find size. It does eat batteries quickly though, so is best used with rechargeable types.

Dimage 7, Minolta's contribution to the digital age

The Dimage 7 from the rear

COURTESY OF PARK CAMERAS

Sony A99 II, the last camera to use Minolta's A-mount

Minolta's afterlife

The digital camera age had barely begun when Minolta found itself in financial difficulties. In 2003 the company announced a merger with Konica, at that time the world's third-largest film maker but, like Minolta, struggling to get seriously into the digital world. For a few years, cameras continued to be launched under the Konica Minolta badge. But even with the combined resources of the two companies, the cameras never managed to compete seriously with the likes of Nikon and Canon. In 2006, Konica Minolta withdrew from the camera business. The company's remaining assets were sold to Sony who, for a while, continued DSLR manufacture based on the A-mount which originated with the Minolta 7000 autofocus film SLR back in 1985. In 2010, Sony added the E-mount to a new range of cameras. In 2016, the Sony A99 II full-frame DSLR became the last A-mount camera, thus marking it as the last vestige of Minolta. AP

From the makers of Amateur Photographer magazine

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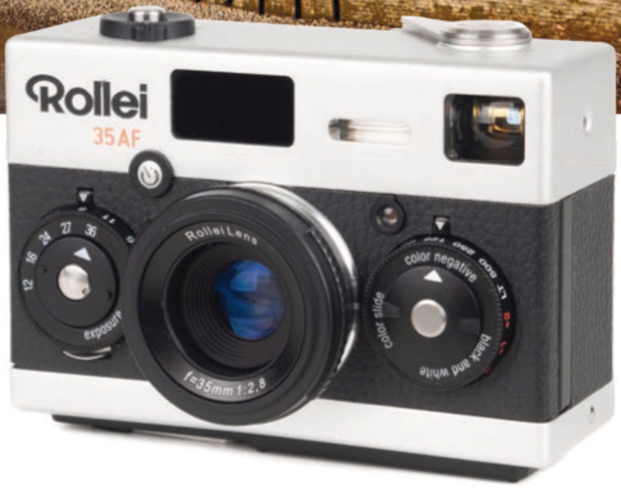
Rollei 35AF, Kodak ColorPlus 200



Rollei 35AF

This modern 35mm film camera pays homage to an all-time classic, but how does it measure up? **Andy Westlake** finds out

For those who grew up with – or simply appreciate – mechanical film cameras from the 1960s and 1970s, the original Rollei 35 counts as an outright classic. It first appeared in 1966, and at the time was the smallest full-frame 35mm camera ever made. A number of variants were made, with different lenses and metering systems, up to about 1981. Now Hong Kong-based Mint Camera has produced a new model, the Rollei 35AF, that borrows the styling and many of the same features, but with one major update – autofocus.

It's important to understand that the Rollei 35AF is an entirely new camera. It's designed to look like its illustrious forebears, and it recreates much of their unique shooting experience. But otherwise, it has nothing in common with them.

This isn't a cheap camera, either. You have to buy it from Germany via the Rollei website, with a base price of around £620. But by the time you've added shipping and paid VAT, though, that'll balloon to over £820. It might take a while to arrive, too; at the time of writing, there was a two-month wait.

I must admit to being a huge fan of the classic Rollei 35 in all its various incarnations, despite – or perhaps because of – its infamous quirks. So when the 35AF appeared, naturally I was keen to try it out. With the key question being, is this new model worthy of the Rollei 35 name?

Design

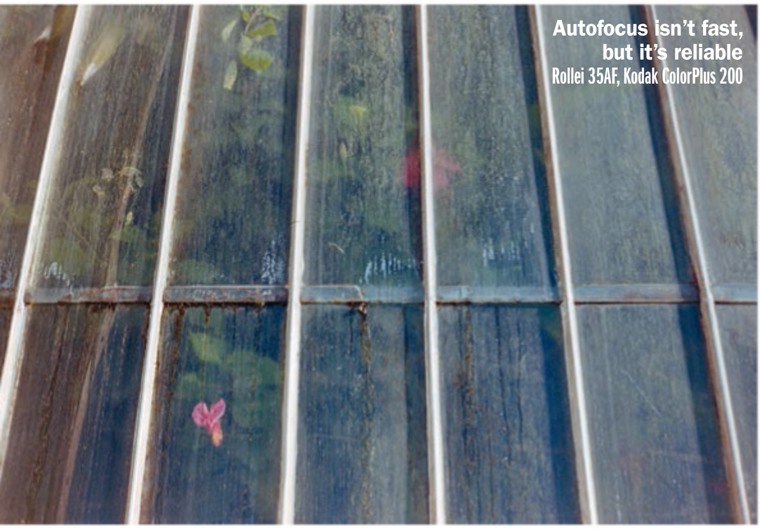
With its two-tone finish and boxy shape, the Rollei 35AF borrows many of its design elements from the original camera. The lens is placed dead-centre

The lens shows no significant distortion
Rollei 35AF, Kodak ColorPlus 200

on the body, with dials on either side for setting the shutter speed and aperture. You get the same corner-mounted direct-vision viewfinder, along with the signature Rollei 35 left-hand wind-on lever and base-plate rewind crank.

As before, the entire back has to be removed for loading film, with even the release latch on the baseplate being faithfully reproduced. One significant change, though, is that the lens is now fixed, rather than retracting, to accommodate the autofocus mechanism. You don't get the awkward bottom-mounted hot-shoe of old, either, with the new model sporting a small built-in flash instead.

Size-wise, the camera measures 104x56x75mm and weighs 242g. That's noticeably larger than the classic models, which makes it feel rather less substantial. But it'll still slip into a jacket pocket.



Autofocus isn't fast, but it's reliable
Rollei 35AF, Kodak ColorPlus 200

Overall, the build quality is fine, without being stellar. The back on my sample doesn't slide on especially smoothly, but it's still perfectly light-tight, which ultimately is what matters. The dials click quite pleasingly, too.

Features

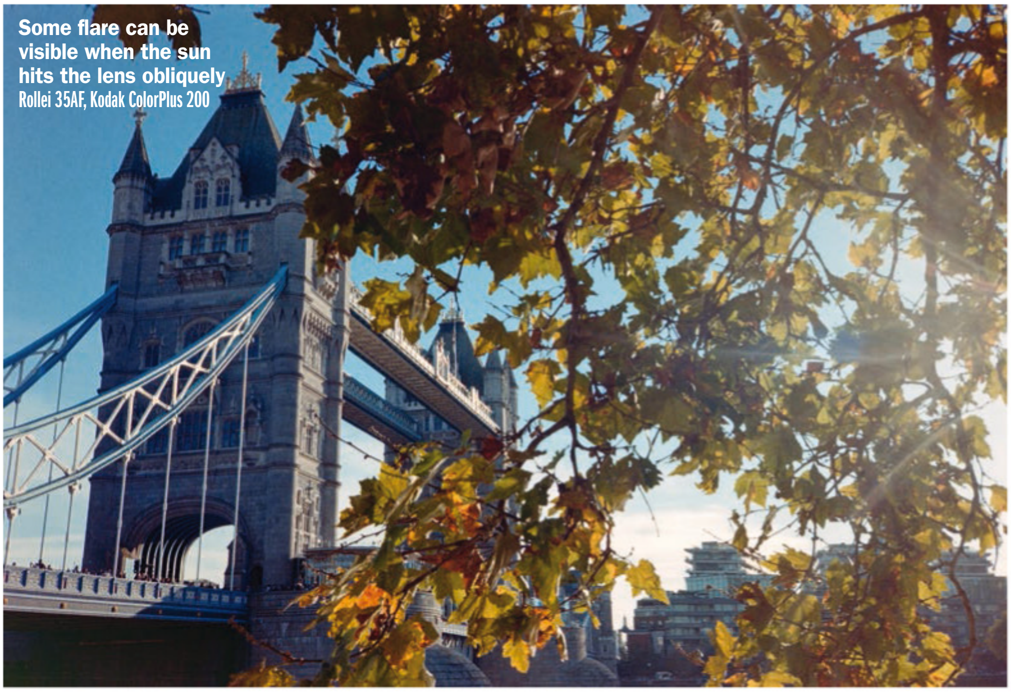
In essence, the Rollei 35AF is an autofocus compact camera with an electronically timed, rather than mechanical shutter. But it differs from the overwhelming majority of 35mm point-and-shoots in offering manual control over both shutter speed and aperture. Unlike the original, you can shoot in aperture priority auto, or set the exposure manually if you prefer.

Where classic Rollei 35s all used 40mm lenses, the 35AF has a slightly wider 35mm f/2.8 optic. This employs 5 elements and focuses as close as 30cm. One thing missing is a filter thread, which is disappointing for those who might want to shoot black & white film. But it's possible to buy inexpensive 43mm adapters on eBay.

Shutter speeds from 1 second to 1/500sec are selected using a dial on the front of the camera. Cleverly, the same dial also enables aperture priority shooting via a position marked A, along with exposure compensation up to +/-2 stops. Set the dial to its LT (long time) position, and you can access longer exposures up to 60 seconds, which are cycled through by repeatedly half-pressing the shutter button. That's not exactly intuitive, and chances are you'll forget how this feature works on the rare occasions you want to use it.

A dial on the other side of the camera controls the aperture, giving settings from f/2.8 to f/16. Unlike classic Rollei 35s, though, it's only adjustable in whole-stop steps, with a single 6-bladed shutter mechanism setting both the exposure time and the lens opening. Light metering is via a small circular cell on the body beside the lens.

Small pointers on the front of the shutter speed and aperture dials allow you to select the film type in use (slide, negative, or black & white) and the number of exposures on the roll. These pointers have no effect on any camera function – they're purely a



Some flare can be visible when the sun hits the lens obliquely
Rollei 35AF, Kodak ColorPlus 200

reminder of the film you're using.

A tiny circular OLED display beside the shutter release acts as both the frame counter and the metering display for manual exposure. You also get a 10-second self-timer, initiated by a small button on the front.

In use

To operate its autofocus and shutter mechanisms, the Rollei 35AF requires a CR2 lithium battery. This sits behind a large door on the back, and good luck with prising it open when you need to install a new one, as there's nothing to grip.

Loading a film requires sliding off the back and folding down the pressure plate. Then you feed the film leader into the take-up spool and start winding. When you're confident it's advancing properly, fold the pressure plate back over the film and replace the camera back. The film speed is read automatically via DX coding, but you can override this if you wish.

This is all a pretty simple process, and a pleasingly authentic experience for those familiar with the classic models. On my camera, though, the film winder feels a bit rough, while rewinding at the end of a roll requires a surprising amount of effort. It just doesn't feel anywhere near as refined as even the budget Rollei 35B.

Another disappointment lies with the viewfinder. Where even the cheapest classic models have lovely large, bright viewfinders, the Rollei 35AF's is noticeably smaller and suffers from marked barrel distortion, meaning straight lines along the edges end up curved. There are framelines for composition, but these somehow contrive to be largely outside of the viewable area. It's a real let-down.

When shooting, I find it easiest to set the shutter speed and aperture by holding the camera at waist level and looking down at the dials from above. In manual exposure mode, the little OLED display indicates not only whether you are under or over-exposing, but also by how much. In Auto mode, it'll warn you if the camera won't be able to set a fast or slow enough speed for correct exposure. But there's absolutely no indication of the shutter speed it's chosen.

Raise the camera to your eye, and a half-press of the shutter button initiates the LiDAR autofocus, which uses a single spot in the centre of the viewfinder. It's not super-fast, and the AF motor is surprisingly noisy too. A small green LED beside the viewfinder lights up when the camera confirms focus, and flashes when it fails. There is, however, no indication of what focus distance the camera has chosen.

To get the autofocus to work reliably, you'll want to point it at relatively large, solid objects. Don't even hope that it might work with moving subjects or complex, multi-layered close-ups, for example. If you want to recompose to place the subject off-centre, you can lock focus by holding down the button halfway.

Taking a photo requires a surprisingly firm press of the shutter release, and unusually it doesn't spring back up again afterwards, either. Instead, you have to wind on the film first. I got the occasional blank frame, too, which I ascribe to not pressing the button quite far enough to release the shutter, while engaging the wind-on interlock anyway.

I shot a couple of rolls of colour negative film using the Rollei 35AF, and I was perfectly pleased with the results. Its metering is accurate, giving consistent exposures, and the autofocus works reliably as well. The lens is a decent performer too, especially when stopped down to f/8 or f/11. I'm confident my scans would be good for A3 prints.

Verdict

BUILDING an entirely new camera to resemble the classic Rollei 35 was always going to involve treading a fine line between paying affectionate tribute and creating a pastiche. In many respects, though, I think Mint has got things right. The camera looks good and faithfully recreates much of the unique and quirky user experience. But now, the addition of autofocus means you shouldn't find out-of-focus photos when you get your film back from processing, which was an occupational hazard before.

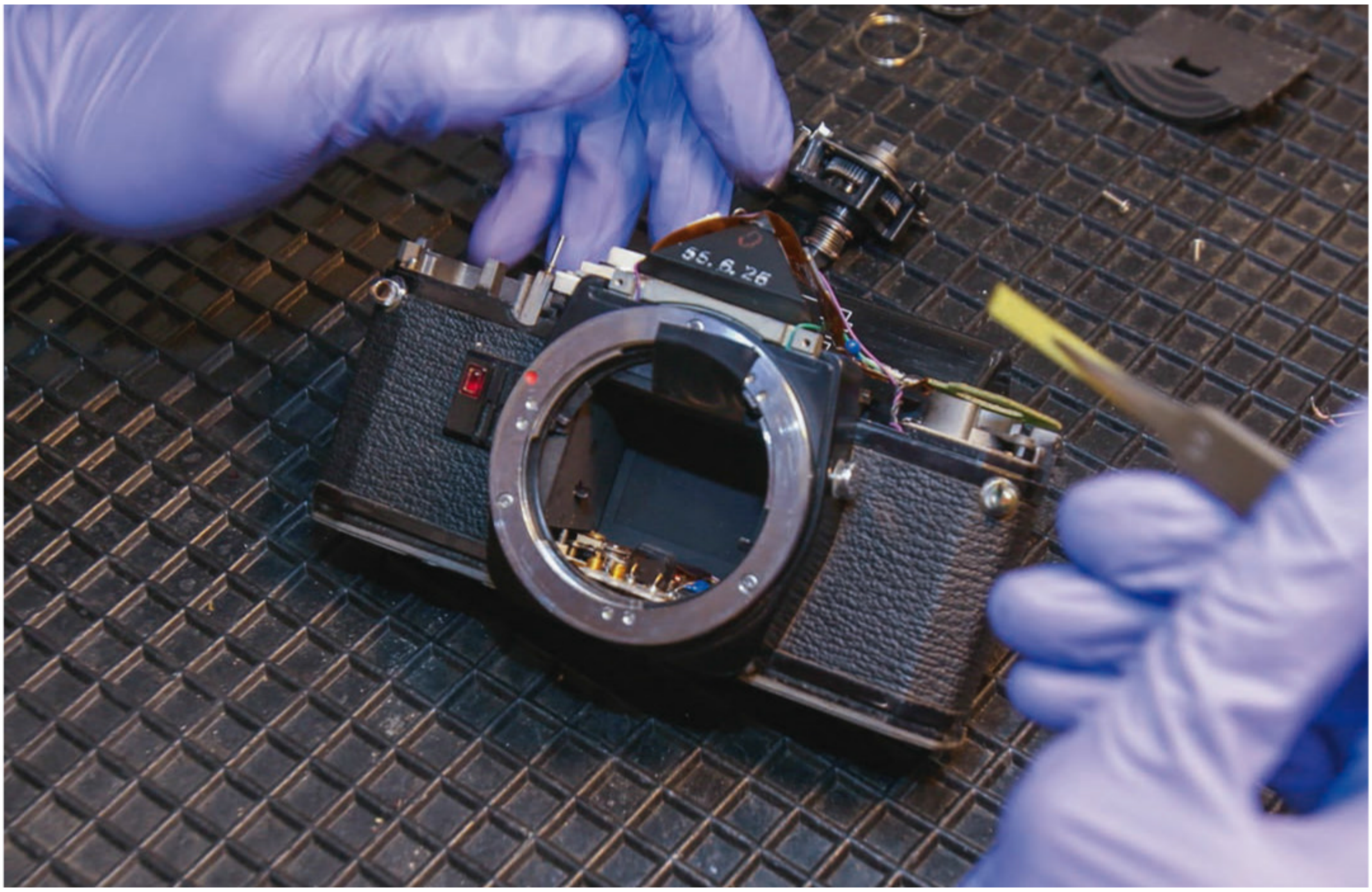
How you take to the Rollei 35AF may well depend on whether you've ever used the classic version. In many respects, the shooting experience echoes that of the original, particularly in the way it encourages you to set the aperture and shutter speed manually. But it doesn't live up to its illustrious predecessors in terms of the smoothness and sophistication of operation.

Despite this, though, the 35AF is undeniably fun to shoot with, while giving very creditable results. And let's be clear; you'll struggle to match this feature set when buying a 35mm film camera second-hand. The real stumbling block, though, is the price and difficulty of getting hold of one. You'd be better off buying a classic Rollei 35 instead.

Amateur Photographer Testbench
★★★

Data file

Film format 35mm
Lens 35mm f/2.8
Lens elements 5
Minimum aperture f/16
Min focus 30cm
Shutter speeds 60sec – 1/500sec
Film speeds ISO 25-3200
Exposure modes Aperture priority, manual
Exposure compensation +/-2EV in 1 EV steps
Viewfinder Optical, 0.5x magnification
Power 1x CR2 lithium battery
Dimensions 104x56x75mm
Weight 242g



ALL PICTURES © SENDEAN CAMERAS

My OM10 gets some TLC from Sendean Cameras

It's a fix!

Getting film cameras repaired might seem to be a hassle, but as **Geoff Harris** discovers, there are some great specialist companies

This special issue of AP is full of celebrations of film photography, but what happens if you buy (or resurrect) an old film camera and it starts to play up?

Fortunately, there are still quite a few specialist repairers in the UK, a very good example being Sendean Cameras. Based in London but servicing cameras from across the UK, Sendean Cameras has an excellent reputation based on a long history – and it is still a family-run business.

I sent in a battered but much-loved Olympus OM10 film SLR to Sendean for a service, and caught up with the company's Andrew Demetriou to get a health report – and to learn more about common issues that dog film SLRs (and analogue cameras generally). 'Most of the cameras that we repair are post-war, but we've also repaired and refurbished older models, such as certain folding cameras and plate cameras,' Andrew explains. 'Examples of those include the Zeiss Ikonta, the Robot Royal and some early Leica models.'

OM10 OMGs

Cutting to the chase, what were the biggest things that needed to be fixed on my trusty Olympus?

'There were a few common issues with your OM10, which we routinely sort out when servicing this type of camera. The clutch mechanism, for example, is vital to winding the film. Over time, the spring tension inside the clutch weakens to the point that the camera will not be able to wind the film to the next frame, which causes overlapping photos. Eventually it won't wind the film at all. We

Sendean Cameras' Andrew Demetriou

lubricate the shutter points and adjust the shutter tension to calibrate the speeds. This work is carried out with every cloth shutter blind system.

Electronically controlled shutters can cause headaches too. ‘Shutter speeds are controlled by electromagnets inside the mirror box, and with age the surface of the magnets oxidise and pick up dirt – causing them to stick and consequently make the shutter speeds unreliable. Once the magnets are cleaned, the shutter speeds will be accurate.

‘The light traps and mirror buffers also need to be replaced – and if batteries have been left in the camera for an extended period of time, corrosion needs to be removed and treated so it doesn’t return. Even though your camera’s batteries were not corroded, we still check and clean the solder points around the battery box as a standard.’

Servicing schedule

So not too bad at all, but generally, how often should film SLRs of my OM10’s age be serviced?

‘We recommend servicing these cameras every five to ten years,’ Andrew advises. ‘If not regularly used, fire the shutter a few times every now and again to keep the mechanism running. We recommend removing the batteries if the camera is not being used for some time, as this will stop the batteries from corroding and damaging the circuit.’

Andrew also pointed out that purely manual cameras were easier to fix than film SLRs with more electronics.

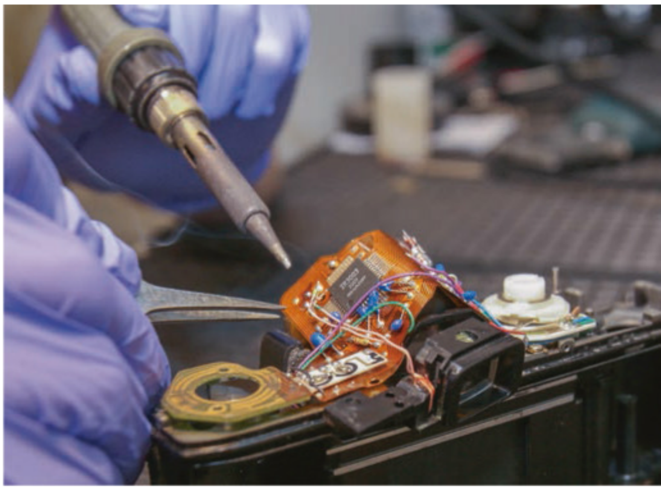
‘Manual cameras are primarily mechanical devices with straightforward mechanisms, like gears, springs, and levers. These components are easier to access, clean, and repair. Vintage manual cameras often use standardised components, which makes sourcing parts or even fabricating replacements more feasible. Also we have a large stock of parts which helps with these repairs too. Furthermore, repairing a manual camera typically requires mechanical know-how and precision tools. Whereas repairs of semi-automatic cameras might also require knowledge of electronics, and soldering, increasing the complexity – they are also more dependent on batteries to power their automatic features.’

Andrew adds that parts for popular film SLRs from the 1960s to 1990s are relatively accessible, especially for well-known brands. ‘As long as you can find second-hand cameras you can repair most cameras. We have decades of spare parts in stock, and sometimes can engineer parts that are harder to replace.’

Use it or lose it

What tips does Andrew have for keeping film SLRs in tip-top condition? ‘As mentioned, it’s important to get your camera professionally serviced at least once a decade, but there’s still a lot you can do yourself. Regularly clean the camera and lens with a microfiber cloth, but avoid touching the reflex mirror or focusing screen directly or using DIY air compressor cans (these can leave an oil residue behind).

‘Then, store your camera in a cool, dry place to prevent moisture build-up, which can lead to fungus. Dehumidifier packs are very handy. It’s also important to inspect light seals periodically for wear or degradation. Light leaks or crumbling foam shows your camera needs a service. It sounds obvious, but load and unload film carefully to avoid damaging the film advance mechanism, and ensure the film is properly aligned to prevent tearing. Regular use also keeps all the mechanical parts moving!’



Older semi-automatic film SLRs have older electronics, with all the subsequent problems

Loading film can be fiddly on some SLRs, so make sure you do it correctly – never force loading mechanisms

THE MOST COMMON FILM SLR HEADACHES

1 Over time, the light seals around the camera back can degrade, leading to unwanted light exposure on the film.

2 Mechanical shutters can become sticky or jammed due to wear or lack of maintenance.

3 If batteries are left in the camera for years, corrosion can damage the circuitry.

4 In humid environments, fungus can grow on the lens elements, affecting image quality.

5 The mechanisms for advancing film can wear out, leading to uneven spacing or failure to advance.

6 Built-in light meters may no longer work accurately or at all, especially if they rely on mercury batteries, which are now obsolete. But Sendean Cameras is still able to calibrate the metering system to newer batteries.

7 Rubber, leather, and other materials used in the camera body can deteriorate, affecting usability and aesthetics. You don’t want to be walking around with a scruffy-looking camera if everything else works well.

About Sendean Cameras

Here’s how to contact Sendean to get your film camera serviced or repaired:

Address: 25 Waterson Street,
London E2 8HT
Website: www.sendeancameras.co.uk
Instagram: @sendeancameras
Phone: 020 7242 7733

JollyLook Instant Film Camera

Andy Westlake has fun building a zoom pinhole folding instant camera

- £79 (assembled camera), £65 (DIY kit)
- jollylook.com

This unique offering from Ukrainian company JollyLook is a zoom pinhole folding instant camera that's mostly made of plywood. While you can buy it fully assembled, it also comes as a DIY kit to build yourself. That's wonderfully mad, and when I heard about it, I simply had to give it a try.

The kit has 65 pieces and should take about two hours to build. Parts are divided up into seven bags for different sections of the camera, so you can pause in the middle of the build if you want. You'll just need to find a small crosshead screwdriver, as you don't get one in the box. I used the supplied printed instructions to build the camera, but a video is available too. Initially the parts mostly screw together, but towards the end, the main sections push together via tongues and slots, which can require a fair bit of force. I found it all to be fairly straightforward; just follow the instructions carefully.

What you end up with is a camera that folds up into a rectangular box, that's much the same size as a roll-film TLR. To take a picture, you fold down the front, and then slide the pinhole/shutter assembly along it, with everything kept light-tight by extending bellows. Open and close the shutter to make an exposure, and then wind a handle on the side to eject a print. A small Fresnel-lens viewfinder aids with aiming the camera. Pulling the pinhole forwards zooms in, with a lever mechanism that locks in positions marked 50 to 110mm. But in reality, you're getting focal distances closer to 80-140mm, or 45-80mm in full-frame terms.

A calculator on the back suggests exposure times based on the focal length and light conditions. I found these were often far too long, especially at longer focal lengths and in bright light, giving bleached-out prints. I discovered that shooting in cloudy, low-contrast conditions worked best, while suiting the tonal range of the Monochrome film I was using. In the end, I got some reasonable images using exposures of five or six seconds.

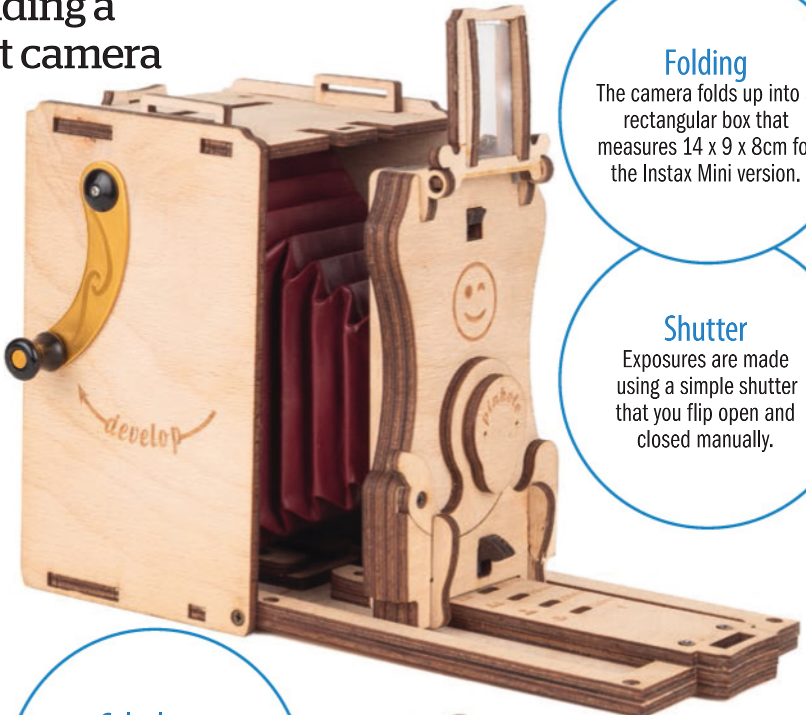
Verdict

The JollyLook Instant Film Camera is fun to build and play with, and I got a real sense of accomplishment from making a working camera, however primitive. It's an entertaining toy, but don't expect it to be a particularly practical camera.

Film
The camera uses Instax film, with versions for Mini and Square formats. Colour film costs £17 for 20 prints, and Monochrome is also available.

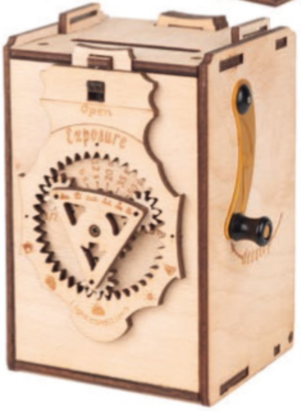
Folding
The camera folds up into a rectangular box that measures 14 x 9 x 8cm for the Instax Mini version.

Shutter
Exposures are made using a simple shutter that you flip open and closed manually.



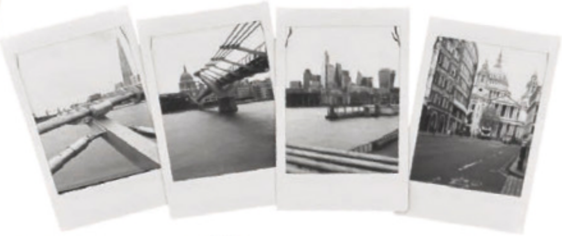
Calculator
A device on the back suggests exposure times based on the focal length and lighting conditions.

DIY kit
Build Your Own Pinhole
Instant Film Camera
65
120



Amateur Photographer Testbench ★★★½

Instax prints shot with the JollyLook camera



At a glance

- Pinhole camera
- Folding bellows design
- Variable focal length
- Available assembled or as a DIY kit
- Uses Instax film (Mini and Square versions available)

PARK Cameras

I'd like to thank Park Cameras for generously supplying the JollyLook Instax Mini DIY kit and Instax Mini Monochrome film

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Evolution is brutal

Machines have been causing unemployment since the Industrial Revolution and this has rapidly increased since 1811, when the Luddites saw the future and destroyed the new machinery and resorted to violence to protect their traditional cottage industries. Obviously, they were fighting a lost cause as the genie was out of the bottle, and the Luddites were brutally put down.

As the evolution of cameras and the photographic process have made it easier for the masses to create photographs, the eventual demise of the photographic profession was always inevitable, sooner or later.

I wrote as much in a letter to the *BJP* in 1990, long before digital (and now generative AI) came along to accelerate the process, and was ridiculed at the time, but my prediction has proved me correct. I retired as a professional on my 60th birthday in 2009. I wouldn't want to still be trying to earn a living from it today. Like the whole of nature, evolution is brutal.

John Heywood

Win! SAMSUNG A Samsung 256GB PRO Plus MicroSDXC memory card with SD Adapter offers up to 180MB/s read and 130MB/s write speeds, ideal for high-res photos and 4K video. 6-proof protection (water, temperature, X-ray, magnet, drop, wearout) and a 10-year limited warranty. Visit **www.samsung.com/uk/memory-storage-devices/**

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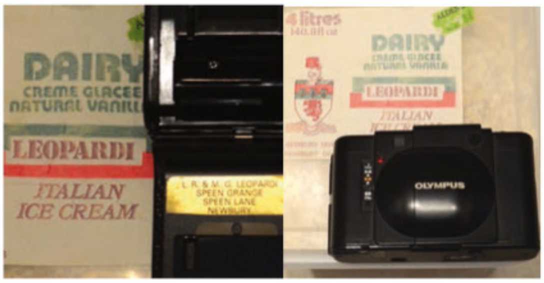
LETTER OF THE WEEK WINS A SAMSUNG 256GB PRO PLUS MICRO SDXC CARD. NOTE: PRIZE APPLIES TO UK AND EU RESIDENTS ONLY



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Adrian Gray writes in about an ice cream connection

Coincidence

I picked up an Olympus XA at an Oxford market and, when I opened it there was an address label inside, in my old stamping ground of Newbury. I mentioned this to my other half who said 'Leopardi? That rings a bell!'. She rummaged in the larder and emerged clutching an ice cream tub with 'Leopardi's' and a Newbury address on it – her mum had bought Leopardi's ice cream back in the 1990s and in fact at one point had even spoken to Mrs Leopardi on the phone.

A little research online and it became clear that the ice cream makers were indeed the very same Leopardis who had owned the camera! Sadly I believe that Mr and Mrs Leopardi have now passed away.

Adrian Gray

Leica love

The Leica 100 celebration issue was very well done. In 2018 I visited Oskar Barnack's birthplace in the small town of Lynow – his house is now a small museum devoted to him. My visit was arranged by a German friend when I was chairman of the Leica Society. I was greeted by the museum curator Heinz Kroll – accompanied by the local Bürgermeister, his PR assistant (to my embarrassment I was given a bunch of flowers, DVD and book) and the press. Herr Kroll gave me a tour of the museum, which contains some nice pieces of old equipment and interestingly handwritten design notes by Barnack. The walls were also adorned by photos taken by local schoolchildren for the annual 'Barnack' competition. I noticed that the street the museum is on is signed OSCAR BARNACK STRASSE, so it seems that the error is catching.

Next day I got a big write-up, with photographs in the German press – my five minutes of fame!

Brian Oliver
Vice Chairman,
The Leica Society

What a cracking series of articles about the legendary Leica and their users. Well done!

I am a Leica user myself, with a IIIg, an M7 and a Q3.

John Charnock

My dad and I really enjoyed the Leica anniversary special. Here is a picture I took with the Leica Q3.

Chris Geiger

© CHRIS GEIGER

Chris sent us this portrait, taken with his Leica Q3

THIS WEEK WE ASKED...

How do you stay motivated and inspired to keep taking photos?

You said...

Szabolcs Kátai
Use it as an escape. Feel down? Feel mentally drained? The best thing is to go for a walk with the camera. Better than therapy.

Pammy Sheldon
Trying something new or trying something that you tried years ago but didn't continue with.

Rick Bowden @rickbowdenphoto
I stopped thinking of myself as a landscape photographer and just as a photographer. That set me free to take any old rubbish.

Elle Bee @ElleBeePhotos
I'm a caregiver awaiting an autism assessment for myself. I have sensory issues. Taking nature photos and writing are two hobbies that I enjoy and help relieve stress and anxiety. Encouragement from others on here always helps!

Andy McDonald
Having a project/goal. Mine was to get a portfolio in AP that then morphed into getting ARPS and is now prepping material for giving talks to camera clubs.

Methanosarcina barkeri @Methanosarcina1
When I can't find anything to photograph or don't have my camera with me, I study light. I look at highlights, shadows, and contrast and observe the light directions. Then I try to visualize something I would like to photograph in that light.

Mark Buckley
Travel shows, coffee table books, a certain weekly magazine, I see fabulous images and think how could I take similar – where is there a church/mountain/street similar nearby. Or I see a sport shot and think where could I take photos of soccer/curling... And then just walking camera in hand, the world happens around me.

Margaret Bishton
My way of staying motivated and inspired by taking photos is to get up in the morning, see and photograph the sunrise. I'm trying to find a new place at the moment. And join workshops via Andy Hornby Photography.

Ronald Piltzer
Create challenges. Examples: 1. Go out to gather images of a specific subject. 2. Pretend you only have a roll of 20 shot film in your camera. 3. Go out with another photographer. Just some ideas.

Share your photos and comments with us on social!
See page 3 for how to contact us

Tobias Key @Tobias_Key
I like using very low-tech cameras (I have a 5x4 view camera) and I immerse myself in the craft of making the best pictures I can with them. There is nothing more satisfying than making good work through your own skill, rather than technology doing everything for you.

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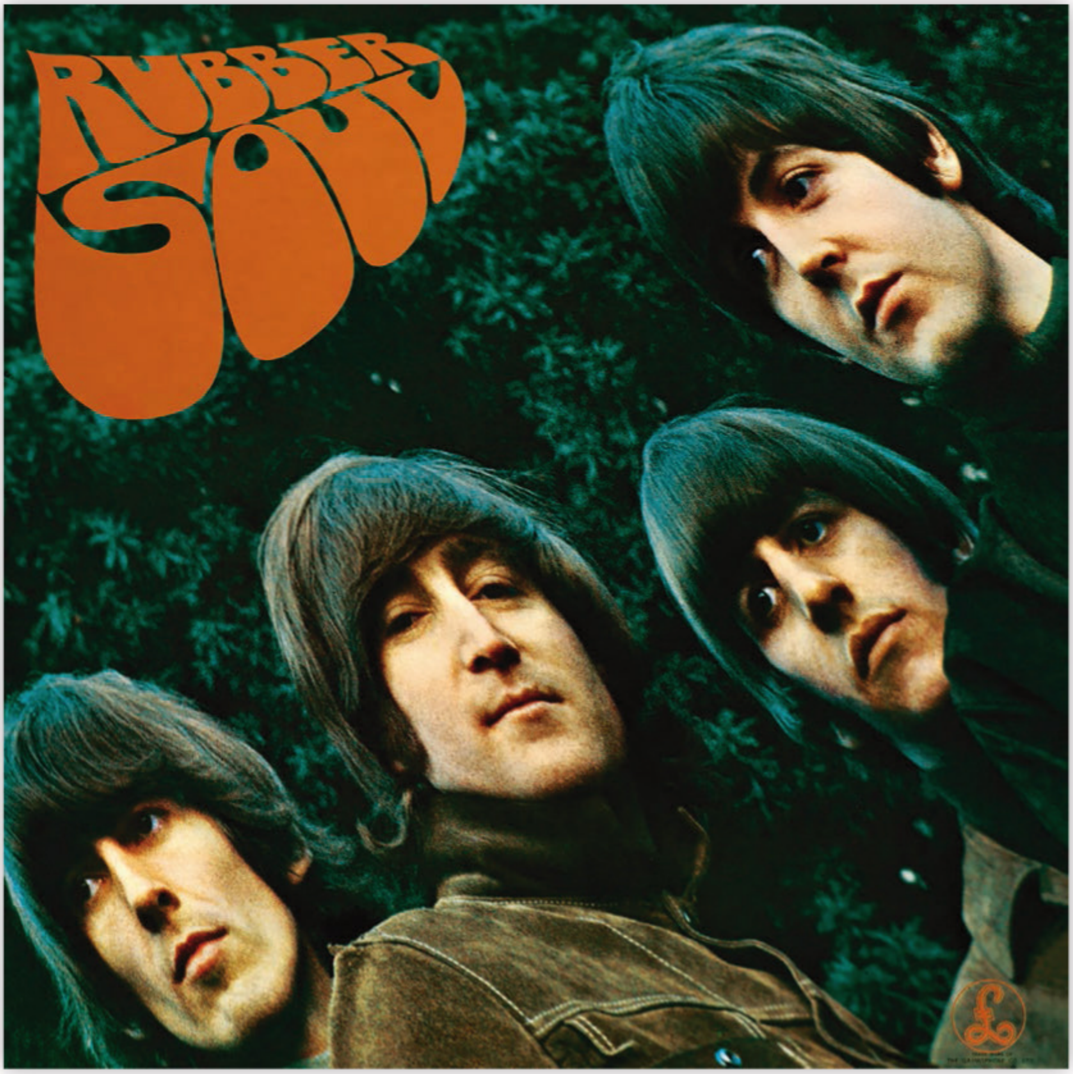

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The front cover of *Rubber Soul* cleverly combined a globular font with a distorted 'stretched' photograph

FACT FILE

The Beatles' *Rubber Soul*

Musicians: Paul. McCartney, John Lennon, George Harrison, Ringo Starr, George Martin, Mal Evans

Released: 3 December 1965 (UK – Parlophone, US – Capitol)

Best chart performance: No. 1 in Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, the UK and the US

Sales: Over 7,000,000 certified sales worldwide

Fascinating fact: The album cover wasn't without an imperfection or two. John Lennon had a small, loose thread on the right shoulder of his brown suede jacket, which was airbrushed out on most of the covers. Also, you could only really see the head of George Harrison, and no clothing, but Harrison is on record as saying about the *Rubber Soul* album cover, 'the picture on the front is pretty good'

Rubber Soul

By Robert Freeman

Steve Fairclough on how a cool font, a distorted image and lack of a band name helped usher in a new era for The Beatles

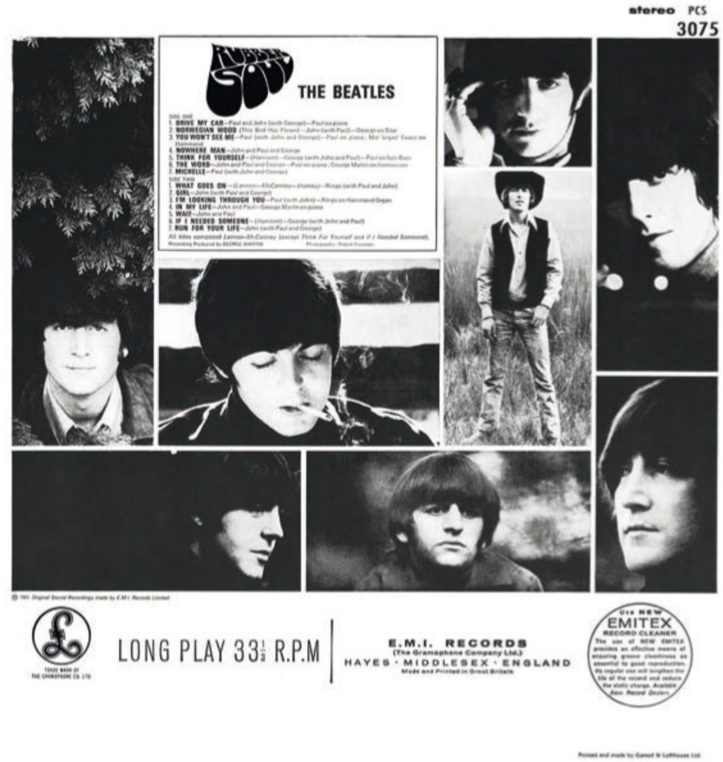
By autumn 1965 The Beatles were developing fast, both as musicians and wildly creative people. Having returned to London from a North American tour the band's manager, Brian Epstein, and producer, George Martin, were looking for a new album to hit the Christmas market. Though the *Help!* movie soundtrack album had only come out in August 1965, the band had established this Christmas album tradition. In 1963 it was *With The Beatles;* in 1964, *Beatles for Sale*.

Thus it was that John, Paul, George and Ringo reconvened in the studio and began to put together what would become *Rubber Soul*. It was the sixth studio album from The Beatles and, said to be heavily influenced by the increased use of pot (and LSD) by the band. The LP included more inventive and introspective tracks such as *Nowhere Man, In My Life* and *Norwegian Wood* (which included George Harrison's use of a sitar).

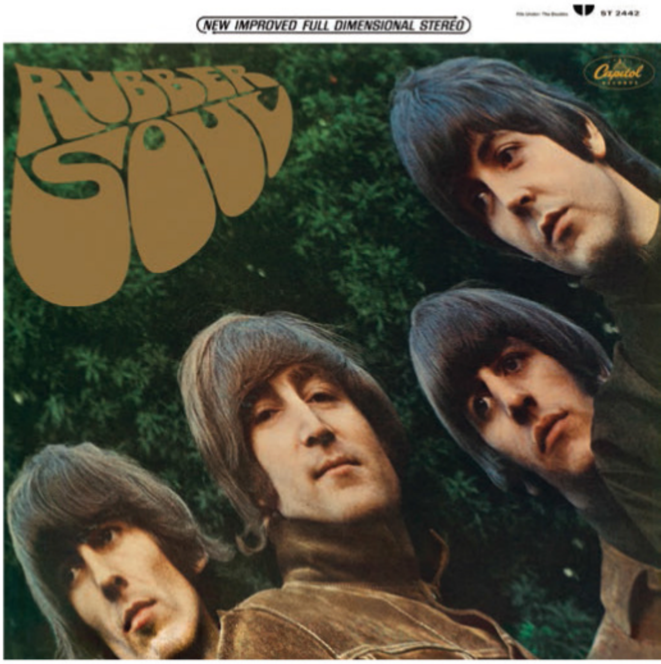
It was clear that The Beatles were writing a new chapter in their musical history, even down to Ringo Starr getting a co-writing credit on the track *What Goes On*, which read Lennon-McCartney-Starkey (Ringo's real name is Richard Starkey). Starr also sang lead on it. The 11 tracks on *Rubber Soul* were recorded between 12 October and 11 November, bar *Wait*, which had been previously recorded in June 1965. After two weeks of mixing, the iconic album was in shops from 3 December 1965.

Why *Rubber Soul*?

The album's title, *Rubber Soul*, is believed to refer to the perception of



The Parlophone back cover of *Rubber Soul* featured eight photographs of The Beatles, two of each band member, by Robert Freeman



The US version of *Rubber Soul*, released on Capitol, featured a different colour on the album's title logo

the Rolling Stones' lead singer Mick Jagger among black blues musicians. In *The Beatles Anthology* documentary series, Paul McCartney explained, 'I think the title *Rubber Soul* came from a comment an old blues guy had said of Jagger. I've heard some outtakes of us doing *I'm Down* and at the front of it I'm chatting on about Mick. I'm saying how I'd just read about an old bloke in the States who said, "Mick Jagger, man. Well you know they're good – but it's plastic soul".'

So, a derivation of the phrase 'plastic soul' was the germ of the *Rubber Soul* album title idea. In a 1970 interview with the *Rolling Stone* magazine founder Jann S. Wenner, John Lennon had explained, 'That [*Rubber Soul*] was Paul's title, it was like Yer Blues, I suppose, meaning English soul. Rubber Soul is just a pun. There are no great mysterious meanings behind all of this. It was just four boys working out what to call their new album.'

Rubber Soul marked an obvious turning point for The Beatles, with the clear musical progression and experimentation – with sitars, fuzz bass and harmonium (pump organ) used within the album's songs. But, arguably, the artwork of the album made it even more clear that the loveable rogues that were John, Paul, George and Ringo had gone forever, to be replaced by a fresh, significantly moodier image.

Robert Freeman (1936-2019) was born in London, England. He graduated in 1959 and, worked for a short time as director of contemporary arts in London. He then became a freelance photojournalist for *The Sunday Times* and other magazines, which included an assignment to photograph Soviet leader Nikita Kruschev, and developed a love of photographing jazz musicians. His work with The Beatles spanned 1963-66 and he was also creatively involved in their film projects. In the late 1960s he directed films, such as *The Touchables.*

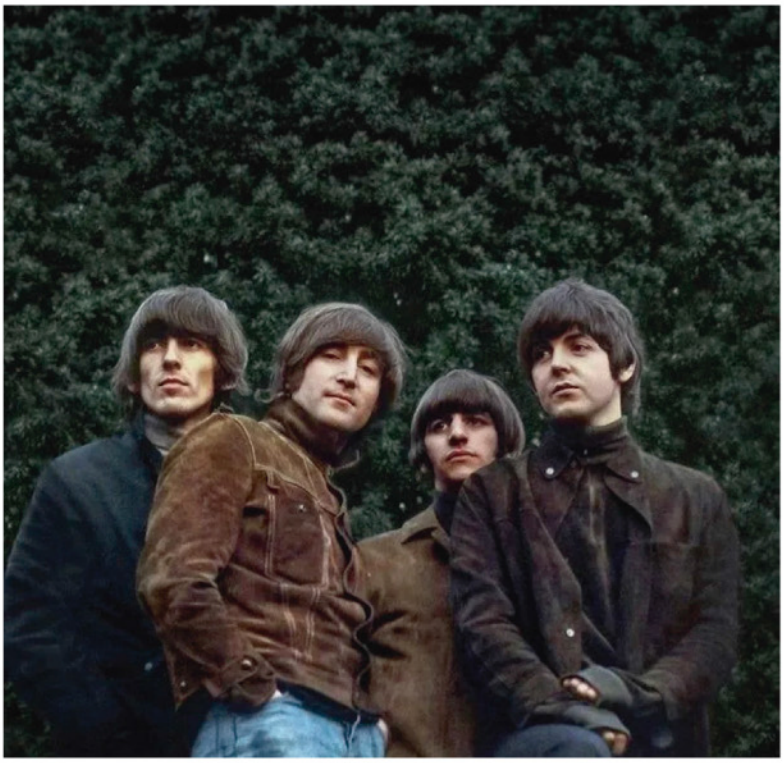
The cover didn't even have the band's name written on it, which neatly illustrates how famous 'the Fab Four' had become since their 1962 debut single *Love Me Do* just three years prior to *Rubber Soul*. The instantly identifiable Liverpudlian lads had grown into men and their faces were deemed to be the only required promotional tool. The same decision to leave the band's name off the front of an album happened again in 1969 on the cover of the *Abbey Road* album, when the then creative director of Apple Records, John Kosh (aka Kosh) and the band agreed it wasn't necessary.

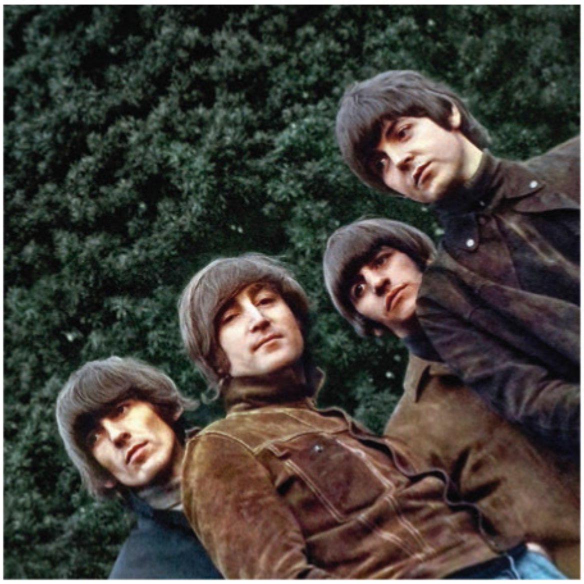
John Lennon's garden

Robert Freeman was the photographer who captured the hallowed picture of the group in the garden of John Lennon's house, Kenwood, in Weybridge, Surrey, in late 1965. The four members of the band were standing in front of a rhododendron bush wearing brown suede jackets and dark polo neck jumpers. None of them were smiling and only John was looking into Freeman's camera lens. It was a clear departure from their cheeky chappie personas of previous albums, but little is known about what camera gear Freeman used for this shoot.

By 1965 Freeman had already established a solid, ongoing relationship with The Beatles – he had already shot the album covers for *With The Beatles, A Hard Day's Night, Beatles for Sale* and *Help!* Freeman had been a freelance photojournalist, often for *The Sunday Times*, from 1961 onwards and was chosen to shoot the first ever Pirelli calendar, which came out in 1964. However, Freeman's favourite assignment had been photographing jazz musicians, including John Coltrane, at a festival in London.

In 1995, Freeman explained, 'It was photographs of these [jazz] musicians that I later showed to The Beatles. I contacted their press agent in London. He referred me to Brian Epstein, their manager, who asked me to send samples of my work to Llandudno, in Wales, where The Beatles were playing at the time. I put together a portfolio of black & white prints, most of which were portraits of jazz musicians. The Beatles' response was positive





Left: This is believed to be the original version of Robert Freeman's photograph, which was later tilted and distorted for the album cover

Above: A wider angle, less cropped version of the distorted Robert Freeman photograph used on *Rubber Soul*'s cover

– they liked the photo – and, as a result, Brian Epstein arranged for me to meet them in Bournemouth a week later, where they were booked to play several evenings at the local Gaumont cinema.'

Freeman would photograph The Beatles in a corridor of the Palace Court Hotel, Bournemouth, on 22 August 1963, which would provide the images for the album cover of *With The Beatles*. Freeman was paid the princely sum of £75 for this work, which was around three times the usual fee for shooting an album cover in those days.

The stretched photo

In Freeman's book *The Beatles – A Private View*, he explains, 'For the [*Rubber Soul*] cover I wanted another angle of the group and an entirely different tonality – greens, browns and black, but with an almost monochrome look. The garden of John's house in Weybridge had the right elements – a high, dark green hedge and a grass knoll that sloped away steeply. This provided the background and the angle.'

Talking about the *Rubber Soul* album cover, in the documentary series *Anthology*, Paul McCartney revealed, 'The album cover is another example of our branching out: the stretched photo. That was actually one of those little exciting random things that happen. The photographer Robert Freeman had taken some pictures round at John's house in Weybridge. We had our new gear on – the polo necks – and we were doing straight mugshots; the four of us all posing.'

McCartney added, 'Back in London, Robert was showing us the slides; he had a piece of [white] cardboard that was the album-cover size and he was projecting the photographs exactly onto it, so we could see how it would look as an album cover. We had just chosen the photograph when the card that the picture was projected onto fell backwards a little, elongating the photograph. It was stretched and we went, "That's it, Rubber So-o-oul, hey, hey! Can you do it like that?" And he said, "well, yeah. I can print it that way." And that was it.'

This happy projection accident was universally liked by The Beatles. Freeman said about all his cover photographs, 'My intention was to keep the compositions simple, so that the focus of attention would always be on The Beatles as personalities.' The late George Harrison noted in the *Anthology* documentary, 'I liked the way we got our faces to be longer on the album cover. We lost the "little innocents" tag, the naivety, and *Rubber Soul* was the first one where we were fully-fledged potheads.'

Specially designed font

The specially designed widened font used on the front cover artwork alone had connotations with psychedelic drugs, and this part of the lives of The Beatles was one that they no longer felt compelled to hide. Indeed, for the first time, the band had taken drugs whilst in the studio working on *Rubber Soul*. The British illustrator Charles Front designed the unmistakable lettering, but later claimed that any drug-related undertone was a coincidence.

THE PANEL ON *RUBBER SOUL*

Ed Caraeff

Robert Freeman, having photographed several Beatles album covers, had mastered posing the band for a square format. By distorting and stretching his beautiful, naturally lit photo helped transition the group into their new, confident, psychedelic persona. And the typography works so well with it.

Andy Cowles

This, the Beatles sixth album, was the first to not feature their name… which is evidence of how far a good haircut can get you. But what really hits you is that only John is looking at the camera. This made him look like the leader. Eye contact matters, people.

Mat Snow

This album deepened the group's enigmatic, untouchable cool… Lennon insolently staring you down, the others lost in the middle distance. Pouncing on a studio slip skewing Freeman's original group shot, the secretly pothead moptops were hinting nothing was quite what it seemed.

Front had researched rubber processing and successfully added the graphic look of rubber to the letters themselves. Front revealed, ‘Whether the Beatles were into LSD or not I don’t know, but I certainly wasn’t. It was all about the name of the album. If you tap into a rubber tree you get a sort of globule, so I started thinking of creating a shape that represented that, starting narrow and filling out. I was paid 26 guineas and five shillings.’

The US version of *Rubber Soul* was released with a more brown version of the *Rubber Soul* font artwork, which more closely matched the colours of band’s jackets, in comparison to the more orange-tinged UK version of the logo font. The font created for *Rubber Soul* later became synonymous with the burgeoning hippie scene, but Charles Front didn’t think too much about the iconic piece of art when he constructed it. He later commented, ‘It was just another piece I’d done, I had put it away and forgotten about it.’

Right: Robert Freeman’s stunning photograph for the cover of *With The Beatles* was shot in a hotel corridor in Bournemouth

PARLOPHONE
with the beatles
stereo

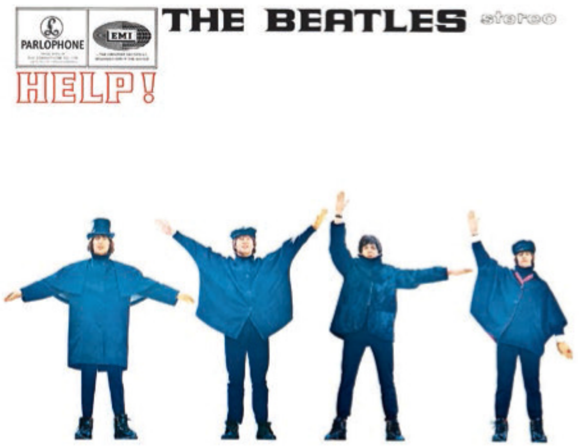
Below: Robert Freeman’s photograph for the cover of *Beatles for Sale* was shot in Hyde Park, London, with the brief to shoot a colour image at ‘an outside location towards sunset’

PARLOPHONE
EMI
BEATLES FOR SALE
stereo

A new Beatles

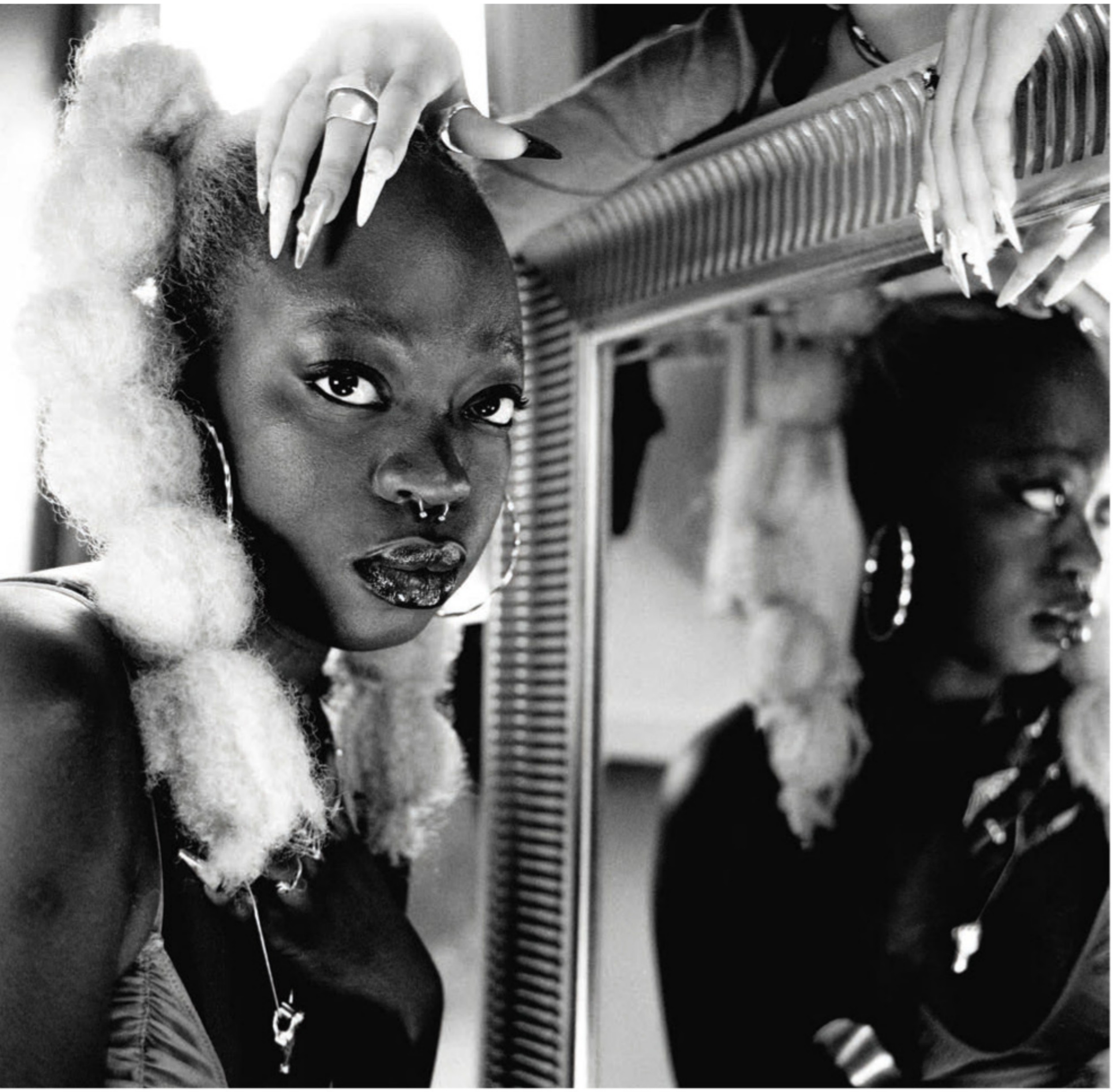
As George Harrison had admitted, *Rubber Soul* firmly ushered in The Beatles’ ‘pothead’ era. The band needed an album cover that illustrated their personal and musical growth, and that’s precisely what the combined creative talents of Robert Freeman and Charles Front had managed to achieve. Freeman explained, ‘uniformity was out’ during the creative process.

According to the album’s producer, George Martin, the intention was to present ‘a new Beatles to the world… and *Rubber Soul* was the first to emerge that way.’ What emerged was an incredibly potent mix of great photography, a new font that made an unmistakeable mark and the happy accident of a slide projection session going slightly wrong, but, ultimately, helping to produce what is now widely regarded as one of the most striking album covers of all-time.



The idea for Robert Freeman’s photograph for the cover of *Help!* was to spell out the word HELP in semaphore but it didn’t look good. The actual poses spell out NUJV

One of the packaging production lines for the *Rubber Soul* album



ALL IMAGES © STEPHEN AKINYEMI

Left: GINA, from the project WHERE THE HE.ART IS

Opposite page, bottom: HALF SISTERS – FULL LOVE, from the project WHERE THE HE.ART IS

Opposite page, clockwise from top left:

SIENNA;

My pearls for me represent vulnerability;

MUSICIAN BINA MEDITATING BEFORE HER STUDIO SESSION;

YOU MAKE ME FEEL AT PEACE

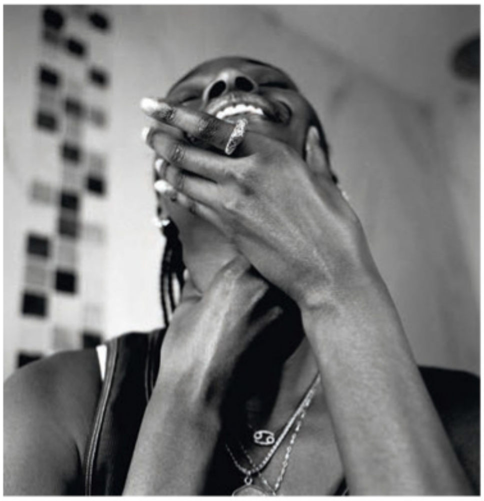
Where the heart is

In the inaugural UK Film Photographer of the Year competition, third-place winner Stephen Akinyemi discusses his emotional and authentic portrait series, Where The Heart Is, with **Jade Burrell**

The third-placed entrant in our UK Film Photographer of the Year competition was another fantastic entry, showcasing exactly what is possible with analogue photography today.

Reflecting on being named a finalist, Stephen says it had been a while since he entered a contest, so the news came as a mix of surprise and gratitude. 'I put a lot of love, effort, and authenticity into the project,' he explains. 'So, for it to be rewarded, it feels nice.' Stephen won £100 worth of Kodak film, £100 worth of developing and scanning courtesy of Analogue Wonderland, and a limited-edition Pentax T-shirt.

Stephen's project, commissioned



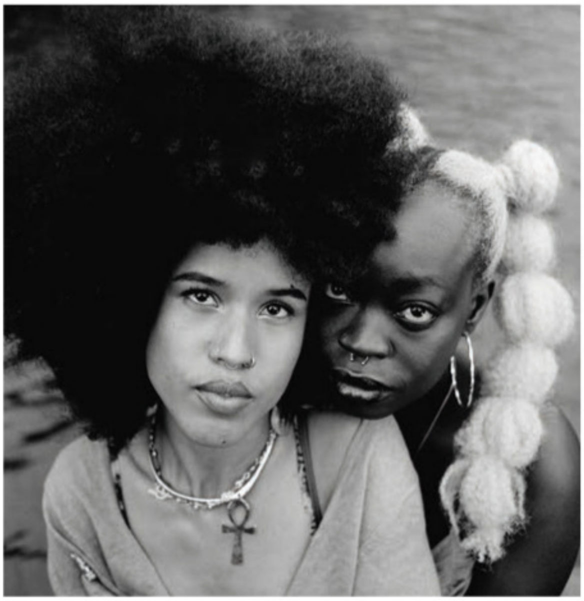
by the British Fashion Council, takes a personal approach, focusing on the places of peace and retreat that each subject holds dear. Before shooting, he met with each individual to discuss who they were and what brought them peace. 'For example, one of the people I photographed, Gina, finds peace by a body of water. She loves swimming and spending time by the river, and her ancestors are people of the Nile, she's Ugandan,' Stephen shared.

Behind the lens

One of Stephen's biggest challenges was working with a team on the fashion-based photography project. As he explains, 'I usually operate by myself with the camera, and when I shoot events, it's as easy as being a fly on the wall, floating about. There's not too much interaction.' Moving from event photography to fashion photography, he had to collaborate with others to bring his vision to life, instead of working solo as he's used to.

When you have your own vision, it can be difficult to work in a team. As Stephen puts it, 'As the originator of the idea, there's a heaven in my head, and you bring people along to reach that destination with you.'

For Stephen, the meaning behind the images is what matters. 'I think that's one of my deepest desires when documenting. I feel like I know the images work for me when there's a genuineness in the images,' he explains. While he appreciates other styles like fashion or editorial work, which he feels often focuses less on the individual, what truly drives him is the process of revealing people's authenticity. 'My love for photography comes when we are disarming or uncovering authenticity in someone.'



From iPhone to film

Stephen's journey into photography began in 2012, when he was more focused on painting and storytelling. 'Photography is something I stumbled on in 2012. Generally, my passions are painting and storytelling.' But a simple moment with an iPhone 4 sparked his love for capturing life through a lens.

It was on a drive to church with his father that Stephen discovered photography. Sitting in the back of the car, he pointed his phone out the window, capturing the contrast between the still brickwork of a residential area and the motion of traffic passing by. 'I remember pointing the phone outside the car, sitting in traffic. There was moving traffic on the opposite side of the road. And against that moving traffic was the stillness of the houses.' That simple yet fleeting moment sparked something inside him. 'When I saw the image on the iPhone 4, I was like, oh man, this is amazing. I think that contrast of like still emotion awoke some love for photography in my mind. Because I had a feeling of, okay, there's a moment and you caught it.'

Individuality

This early experience with photography led Stephen to a deeper passion for portraiture. 'That developed into portraiture, uncovering the idiosyncrasy of people, individuality, diversity,' he notes. This theme is evident in his competition entry as well as his latest project, which explores themes of fatherhood, relationships, and the sensitivity shared between fathers and their children – something he feels is not often depicted in media.

Stephen's work in the UK Film Photographer of the Year contest is just the beginning of his journey. His love for photography, born from a simple moment, has evolved into a deeper exploration of identity, emotion, and storytelling. His recognition in the competition is a testament to the power of storytelling through film, and his dedication to capturing the human experience in all its richness.

You can follow Stephen's photographic journey on his Instagram, @bare_clips

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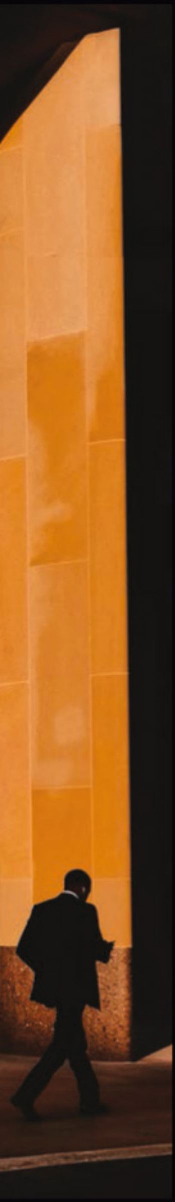

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Reader Portfolio

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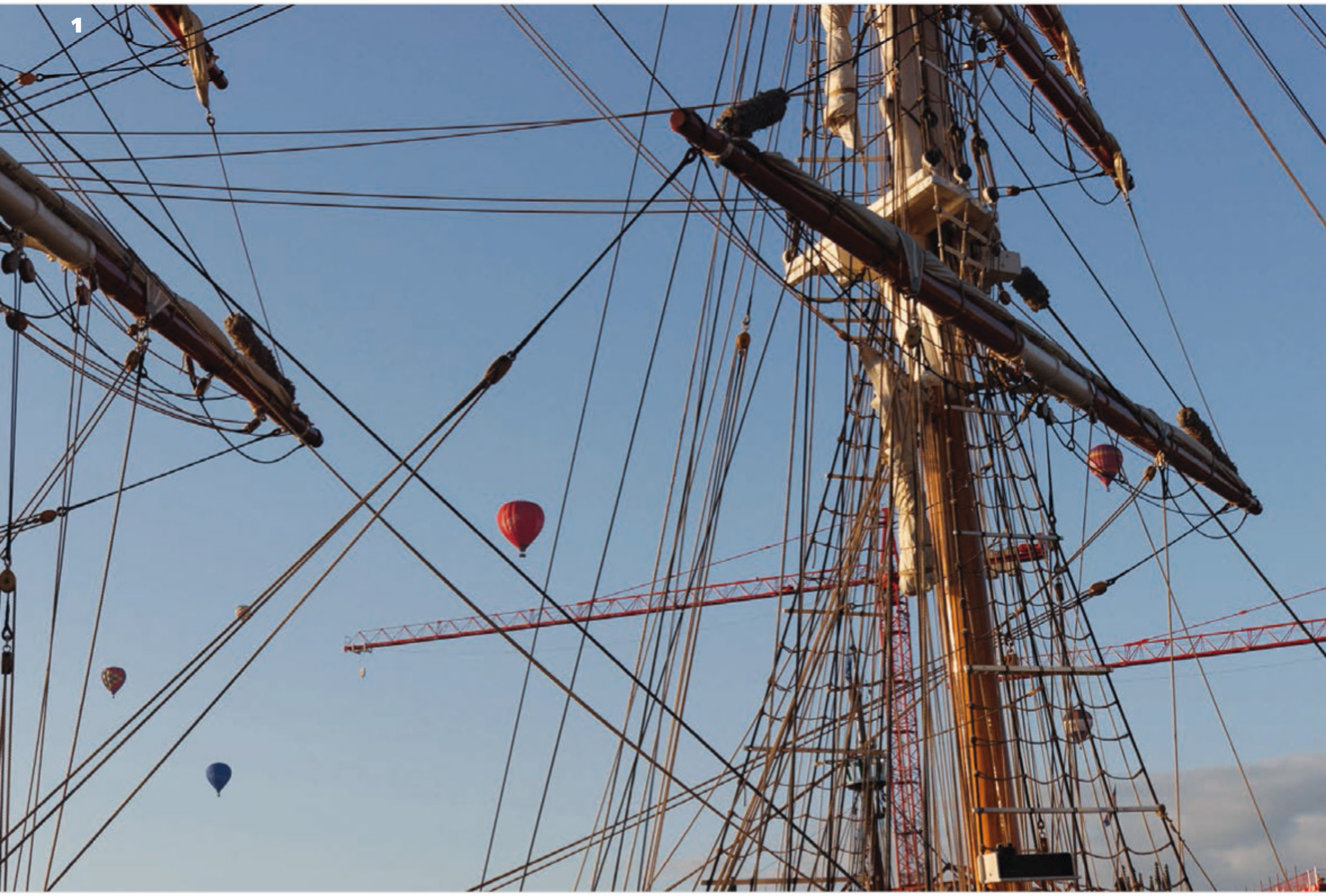
1



Jonathan Williams, Colchester

About Jonathan

Jonathan is retired, and is a member of the Royal Photographic Society.

How did you get into photography?

In the 1960s I took photographs of steam engines but when they were no longer around, photography became my hobby. Ironically, some of the photographs I took then have been published in a magazine.

What do you love about photography?

It gives me the freedom to explore ideas and often to write about them with the photographs as a means to illustrate these ideas. I also like the technical and physical side of photography like building cameras and developing film.

Favourite subjects

I tend now to choose subjects that fit into a project that I am working on rather than using the normal subject categories, usually a project that I can write about.

How and where do you find inspiration?

At the moment I find inspiration reading books about the environment and man's effect on it.

What was your first camera?

An Agifold 620.

Current kit

Olympus OM film cameras and lenses;
Canon EOS 600D;
Self-build cameras 120 and 5X7

Favourite lens

Canon 24mm f/2.8 EF-S.

Favourite accessory

Uni-Loc tripod.

Dream purchase

A 10x8 camera.

What software do you use for editing?

DxO PhotoLab, Adobe Photoshop.

Bristol Balloon Festival

1 This was taken in Bristol harbour, and I wanted to juxtapose the two modes of transport, with the rigging of the ships contrasting with the shape of the balloons.

Canon EOS 600D, 18-55mm at 36mm, 1/180sec at f/8, ISO 100

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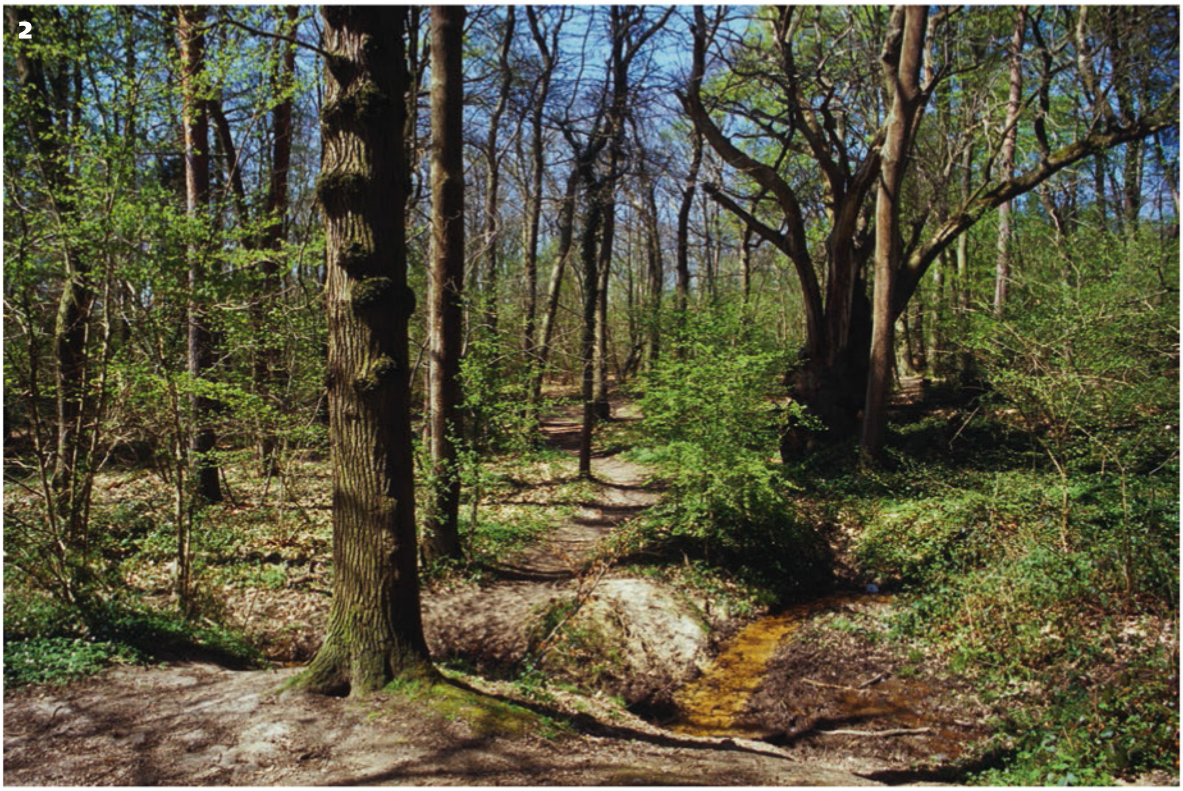
2

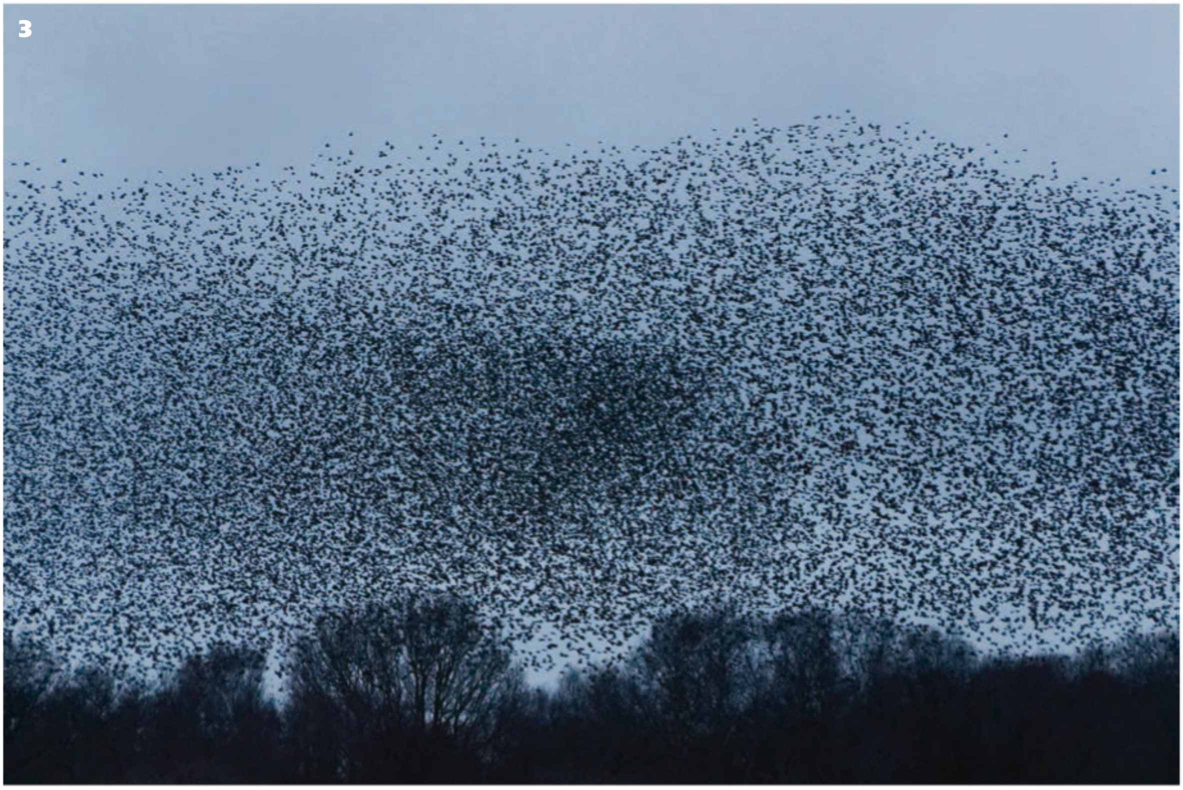


Friday Woods, Colchester

2 In this photograph I wanted to create a complex composition. I kept the tree trunks darker to provide a structure to the composition and I wanted to emphasise the pathways within the wood.

Olympus OM-SP, 24mm, 1/125sec at f/8, ISO 100 (Provia film)

3



Ham Wall Murmuration

3 I wanted to create a layered pattern effect filling the landscape format and contrast the pattern of the birds with the treeline in the background, rather than attempt to take a photograph of interesting shapes of the birds.

Canon EOS 600D, Sigma 70-300mm at 168mm, 1/250sec at f/5, ISO 1600

ALL IMAGES © JONATHAN WILLIAMS

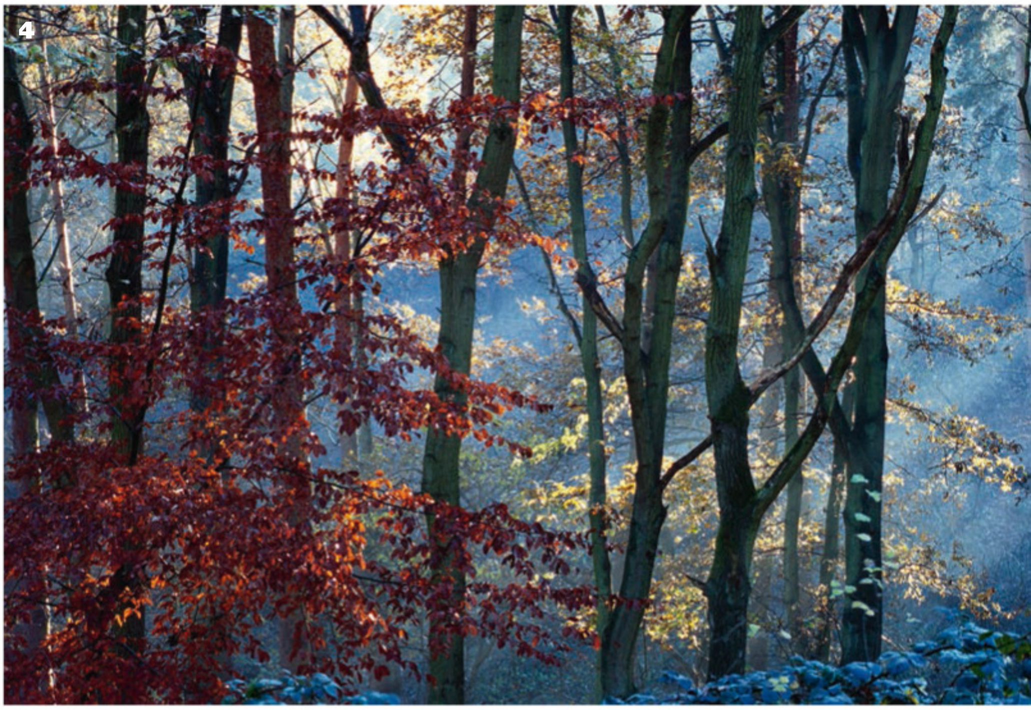
Favourite photographers
Edward Weston, Robert Adams, Mari Mahr, Harry Callahan and Fay Godwin.

Favourite photography books
The Americans by Robert Frank; *Between Ourselves* by Mari Mahr; *On Photography* by Susan Sontag.

Favourite tips
Read about the history of photography.

About your pictures
My aim with this particular set of photographs is to try to avoid photographic cliches as much as possible and to give the photographs a less painterly look. In some of the images I have attempted to provide a contrast within the frame. I think that I am always trying to experiment with photography just to see what ideas I can generate. I think that I sometimes look upon photographs as visual poems.

4



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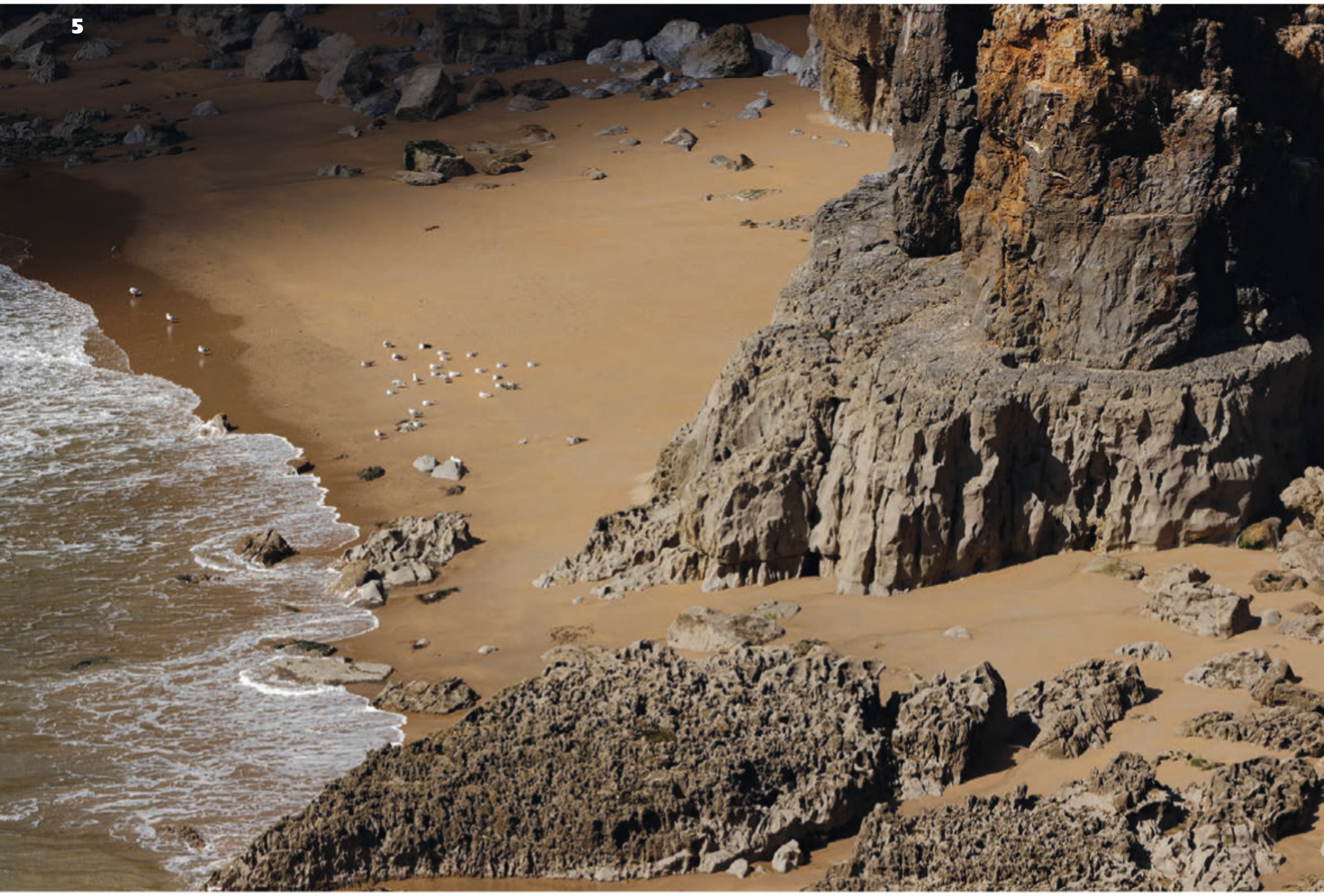

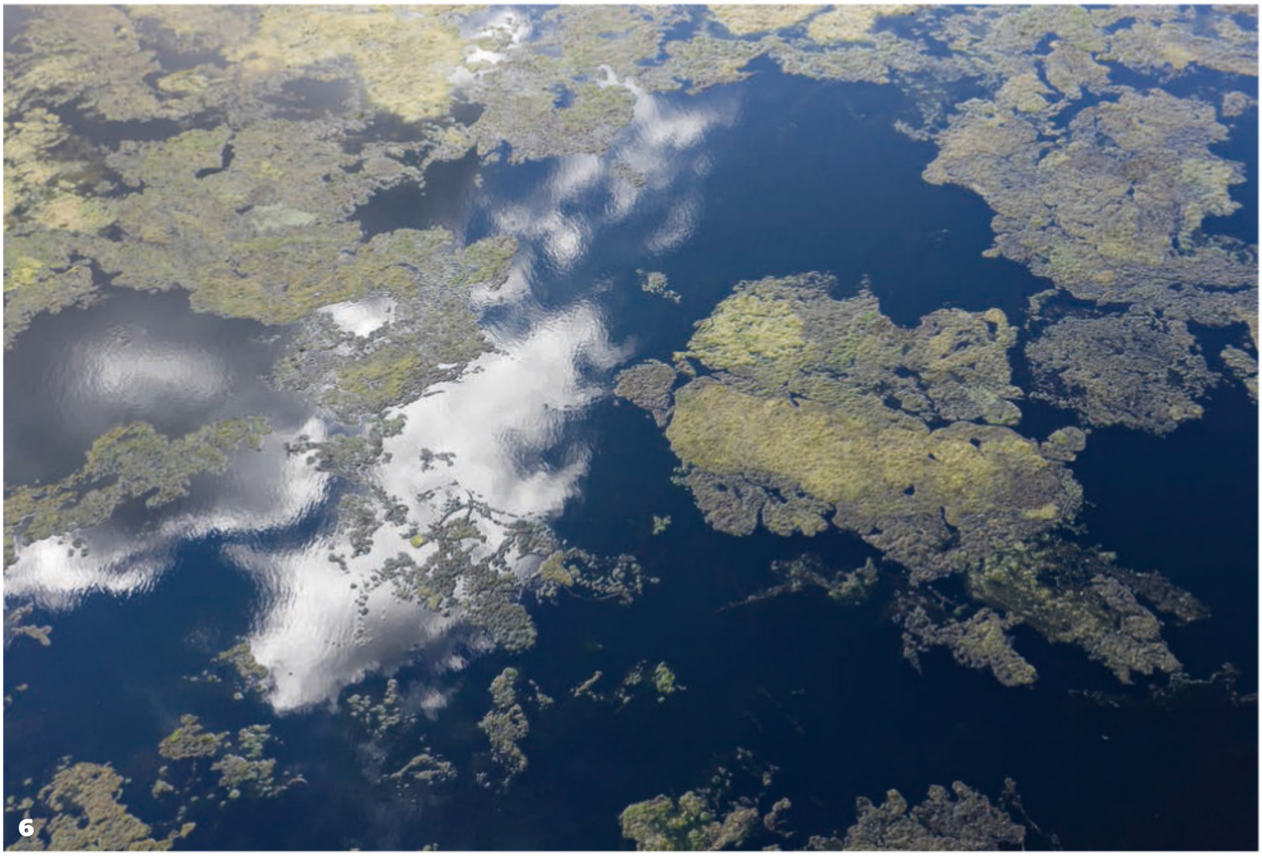

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Lexden Gathering Grounds, Colchester

4 This was taken in a local nature reserve. I chose to take the photograph in December as there would be fewer leaves on the trees and to contrast the leaf colours with the shape and colour of the tree trunks.

Olympus OM-SP, 135mm, 1/125sec at f/8, ISO 100 (Provia film)

Pembrokeshire Coast

5 Using a long lens, I wanted to combine elements of the coast i.e. rocks, beach and waves with the bird life of the coast. Also, I wanted to show the sculptural qualities of the rocks in order to make a contrast with the smoothness of the beach and the sea wave shapes.

Canon EOS 600D, Sigma 70-300mm at 92mm, 1/400sec at f/7.1, ISO 100

Pembrokeshire Lake

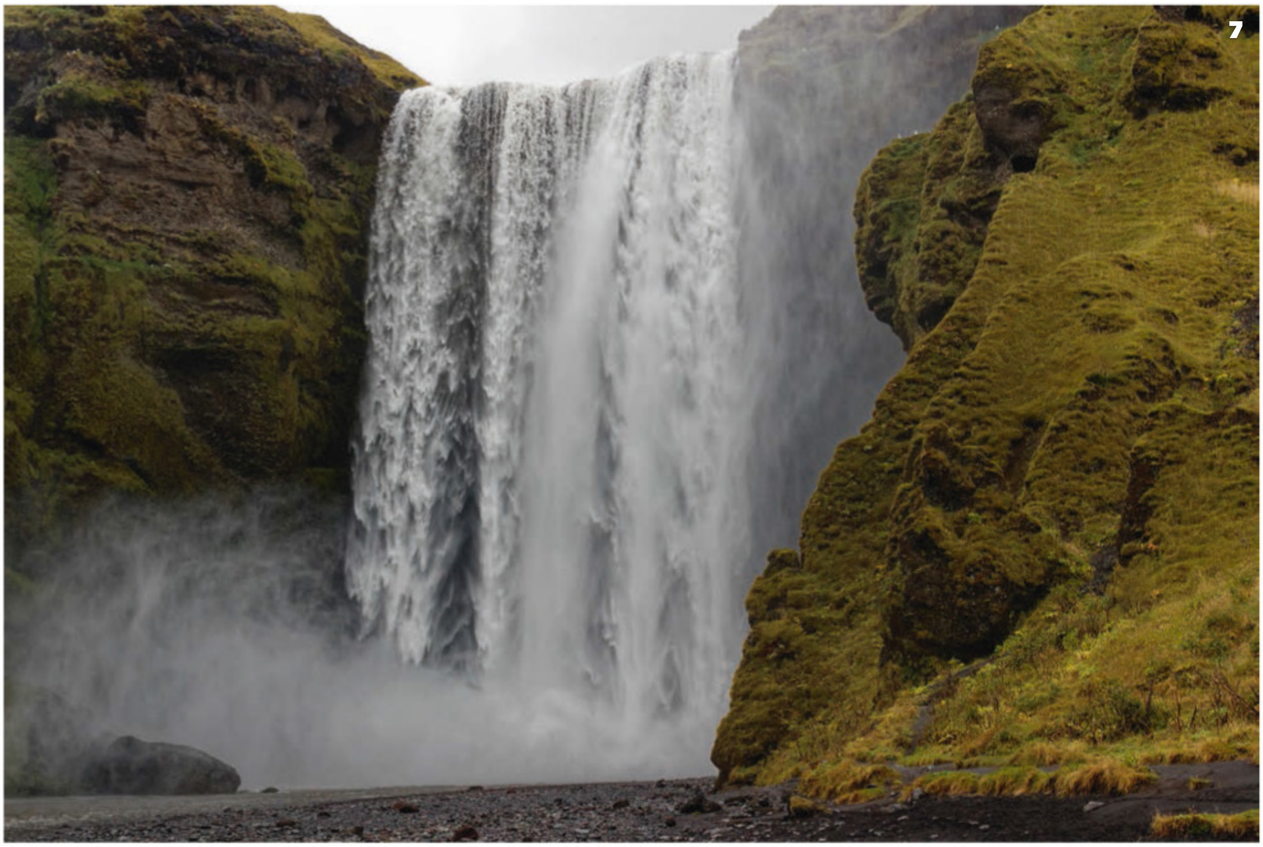
6 I wanted an unconventional view, so I combined the surface of the lake with the reflections of the clouds – bringing together two aspects of landscape and so creating an illusory landscape by the photograph not having a sense of scale like an aerial photograph.

Canon EOS 600D, Canon 24mm f/2.8, 1/100sec at f/5, ISO 100

Waterfall, Iceland

7 I omitted any figure from the photograph as I wanted to avoid the cliché of having someone in the photograph that would give a sense of scale. It is also my attempt to produce a photograph to listen to, rather than just look at.

Canon EOS 600D, Canon 18-55mm at 33mm, 1/125sec at f/6.7, ISO 100



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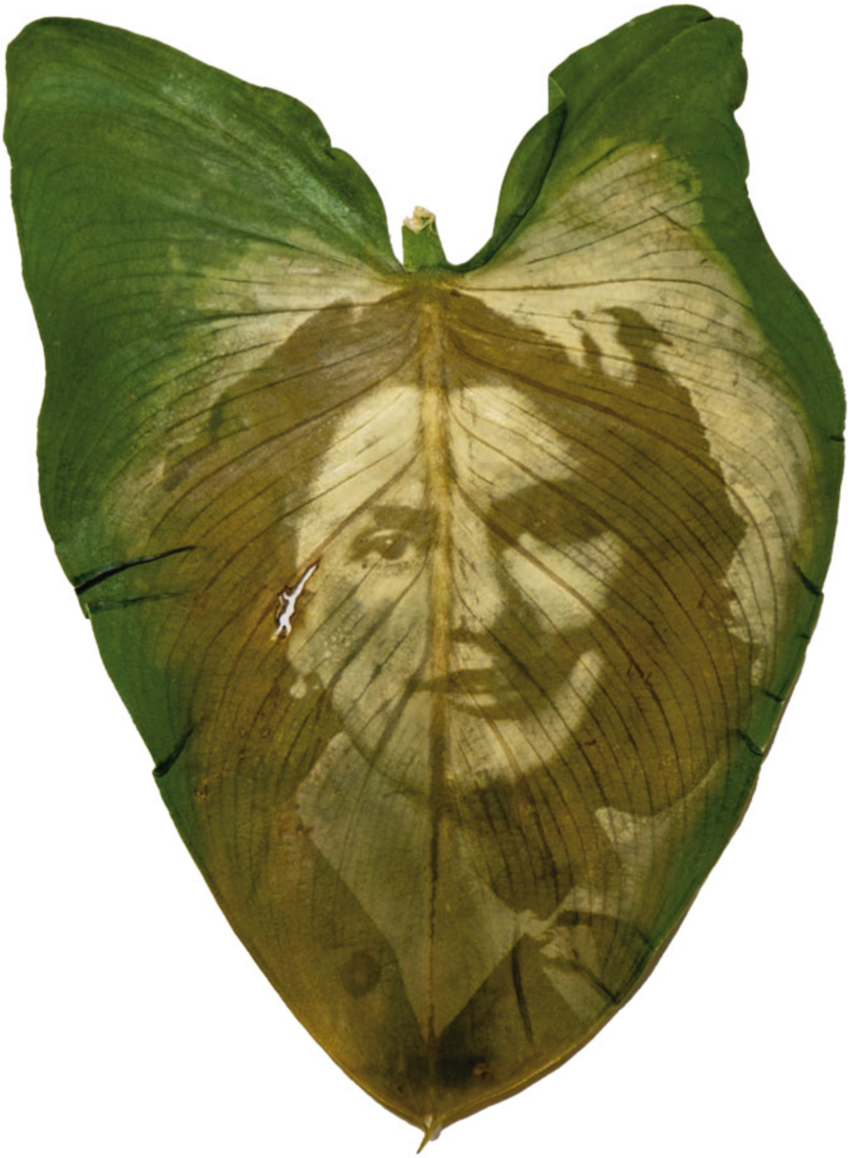

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Above: Lolita

Traces

Exploring the relationship between women and the land, **Peter Dench** finds out more about this unusual SWPA shortlisted entry by Yinna Higuera

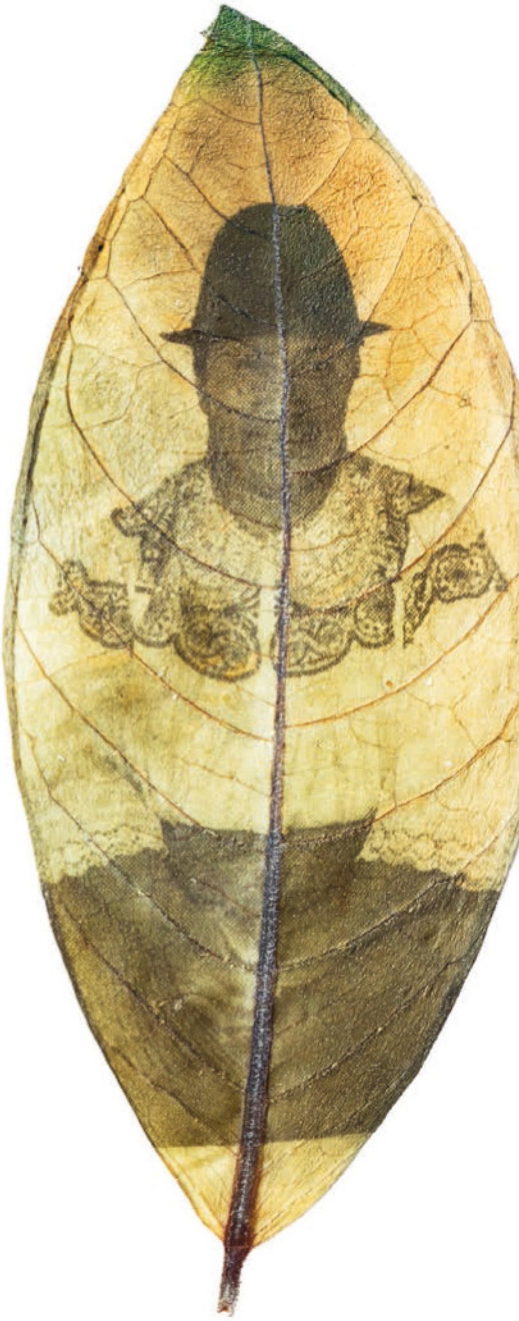
These portraits of rural Ecuadorian women in the Zuleta community highlight the women's essential roles as caretakers of tradition and the environment. The images are printed using plant-based photosensitivity on banana leaves, cacao, coffee, vegetables and herbs from their home gardens. The series, titled Traces, by Yinna Higuera, was shortlisted in the creative category, professional competition, Sony World Photography Awards 2025. Yinna Higuera spoke to us about her series.

AP: What drew you to the chlorophyll printing process?
YH: We live in a world where time has become fleeting, where speed and immediacy dictate our perception of reality. Chlorophyll printing offered me a pause, a breath amid this relentless pace. More than just a technique, it is a dialogue with nature – a process that demands patience and surrender, where the image does not impose itself but rather emerges slowly, guided by light and life itself. I was drawn to the possibility of creating in an organic way, of working with the ephemeral, of embracing uncertainty and transformation as inherent parts of the process. In a world oversaturated with digital imagery, this method brought me back to the essentials: time, matter, and the intimate connection between the image and nature.

AP: Can you describe a particularly challenging or rewarding moment while creating Traces?
YH: The greatest challenge was learning to engage in a dialogue with nature, to understand its subtle language and its own rhythm. The sunlight, the resilience of the leaves, the unpredictability of the weather. At first, every failed attempt felt like a setback, but over time, I came to understand that imperfection itself holds profound lessons.

The most rewarding moment arrived when the first images began to reveal themselves clearly on the leaves, as if nature had finally granted me its trust. Yet even more moving was the moment I shared these portraits with the women who participated in the project. In their eyes, I saw astonishment, emotion, and an unexpected recognition of themselves in the living matter. It was an almost magical act of reunion, a moment of rediscovery that transcended the image itself.

AP: How do you choose the leaves for your prints? Does the type of leaf influence the final image?
YH: Each chosen leaf is more than just a surface; it is a fragment of history, a symbol of identity and memory. I always strive for the



selection to hold personal significance for the person being portrayed. Whenever possible, I ask the women to share a leaf from their gardens – one from a plant they have nurtured with their own hands, one that reminds them of a moment, a tradition, or that has accompanied them in some way throughout their lives. If that is not possible, I ask about their favourite plant and begin experimenting with it.

It doesn't always work, but that uncertainty is an essential part of the process. Each leaf has its own cellular structure, its own resilience, its own way of absorbing and responding to light. Some embrace the image with clarity, while others blur, fragment, or transform it. The result is never entirely predictable; it is a collaboration between nature and the image, where photography ceases to be an imposition and instead becomes a dialogue with the organic, with the ephemeral, with the imprint that life itself leaves on matter.

Above: Raquel

Right: Elvia

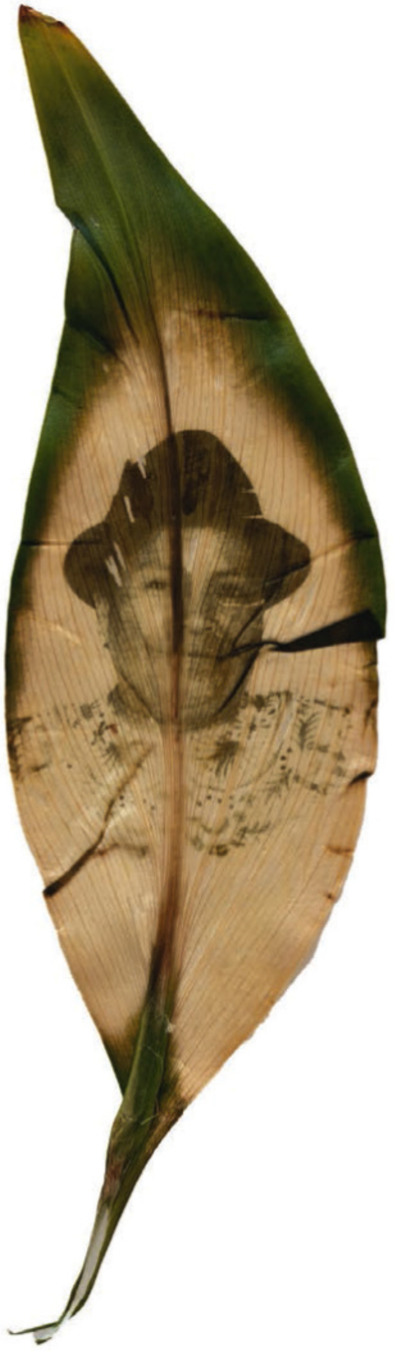
AP: Do you manipulate the leaves before or after exposure to control the outcome?
YH: Leaves must be treated with the same respect and care as a traditional photographic print, but with the awareness that they are witnesses to the passage of time. It is an almost ritualistic process, where each leaf must be cleaned, hydrated, and delicately prepared to receive sunlight and transform into an image.

However, unlike other photographic methods, control here is fleeting; nature is the true author, and its intervention is unpredictable. The image is not merely imprinted onto the leaf but enters into a dialogue with its texture, its veins, its fragility. In this process, photography ceases to be an act of dominance over matter and becomes a collaboration with the organic, a gesture of reverence toward impermanence.

AP: What was the success rate with the printing?
YH: I have not kept an exact record, but this project has been in development since 2020, and so far, I have obtained around 20 final images. On average, only one out of every 10 to 15 attempts successfully survives the process. It is not just the final result that matters, but the process itself – the repetition, the observation, the connection with the ephemeral, and the possibility of creating something that, like nature, follows its own rhythm and harbours its own mysteries.

AP: What do you take the original portrait on to create the positive?
YH: I work with a Sony camera to capture the original portraits and to digitise the chlorophyll prints. In this process, photography becomes a bridge between the ephemeral and the permanent, between memory and transformation.

AP: What inspired Traces, and what story are you trying to tell through this series?
YH: Traces emerges from the ancestral relationship between women and the land, from that silent yet powerful bond between those who cultivate and what is cultivated. Through these images, I seek to reveal the symbiosis that exists between women and



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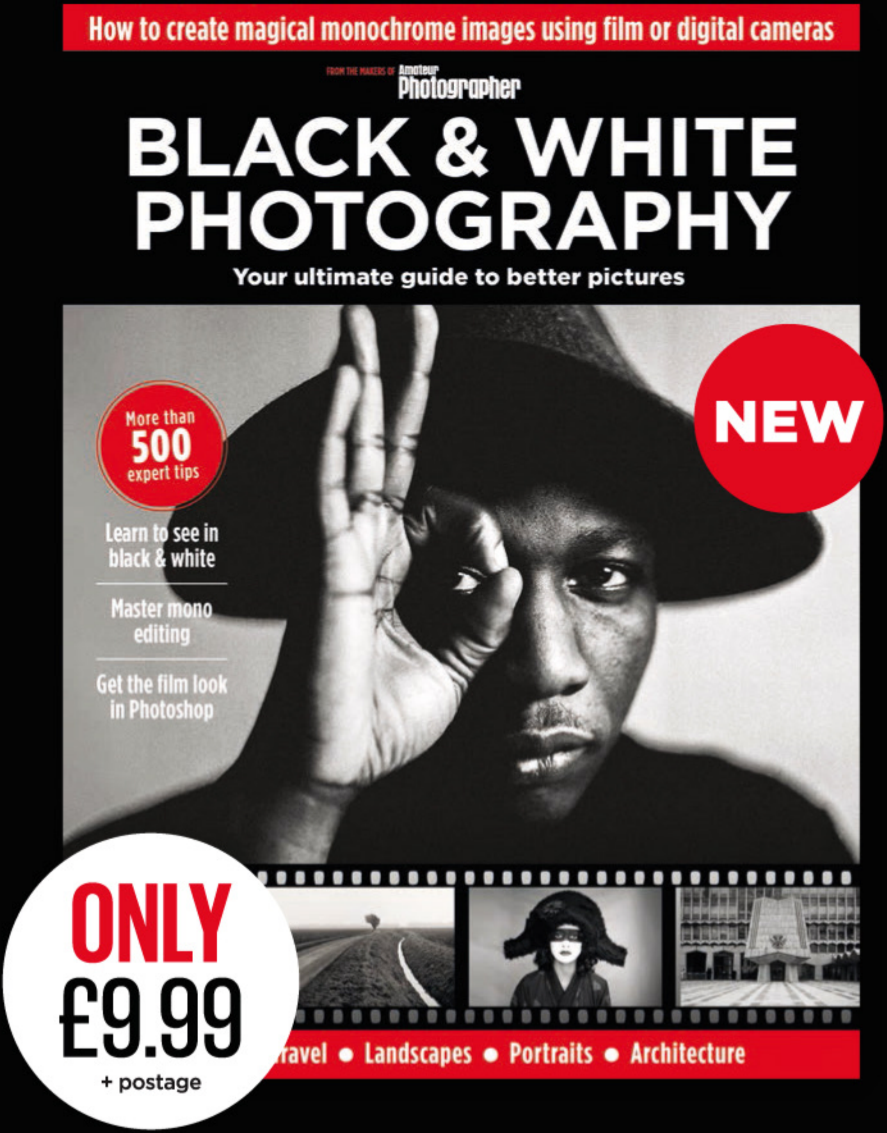

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plants – both nourish, both heal, both sustain life in its many forms.

Beyond an individual story, this project is a visual testimony to the interconnectedness of nature and humanity, a reflection of how we influence one another, of how the act of sowing, tending, and harvesting not only transforms the earth but also those who work it. In this deep exchange of energy and memory, a new relationship of reciprocity is born, where photography becomes a space for reflection on fragility, resilience, and the way we inhabit and leave traces on our surroundings.

AP: Do you have an example of one of the unique Zuleta community women's stories?
YH: Elvia, on the other hand, taught us the value of community through the act of cooking. Preparing bread and café de haba with her was not just a culinary experience, it was a ritual of knowledge transmission, a way to preserve memory and reaffirm identity. In Zuleta, embroidery, food, and the land are not separate elements; they are threads that weave together generations, telling stories of resilience, care, and belonging.

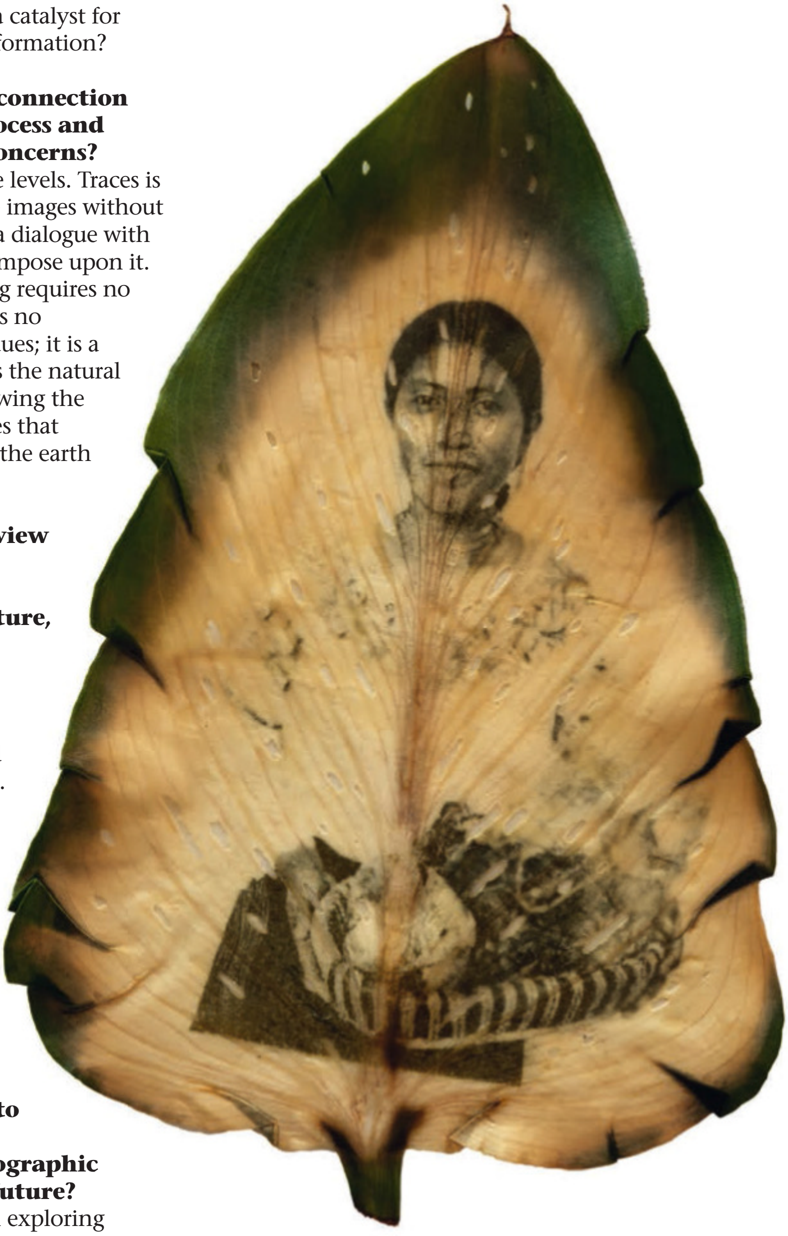
AP: The idea of impermanence is central to chlorophyll prints – how does that relate to the themes in your work?
YH: Impermanence is one of the great truths of life: nothing is eternal, everything transforms. Photography, traditionally understood as an attempt to fix a moment in time, is no exception to this reality. In Traces, the fragility of the images printed on leaves is not a limitation but a reminder of the ephemeral nature of existence. Each portrait is a whisper of light on living matter, an impression that, like memories, slowly fades away.

This process confronts us with essential questions: Why do we seek to preserve? What does it truly mean to 'leave a trace'? Is photography merely a visual record, or can it be a catalyst for reflection and transformation?

AP: Do you see a connection between your process and environmental concerns?
YH: Yes, on multiple levels. Traces is an attempt to create images without harm, to engage in a dialogue with nature rather than impose upon it. Chlorophyll printing requires no chemicals and leaves no contaminating residues; it is a process that respects the natural cycle of matter, allowing the image, like the leaves that hold it, to return to the earth organically.

AP: How do you view the relationship between photography, nature, and time in your work?
YH: I see it as a gift, a way of being fully present in the world with all senses open. Photography is not just about capturing an image; it is about reconnecting – with life, with people, with the environment that surrounds us.

AP: Do you plan to explore other alternative photographic processes in the future?
YH: Yes, I have been exploring embroidery on photography, a practice that, after my time in Zuleta, has taken on an even deeper meaning. In Zuleta, embroidery is not merely a decorative technique; it is a language, a way of telling stories, preserving memory, living, and weaving identity. In this context, embroidering an image becomes an act of re-signification, a dialogue between the visual and the tactile, between the ephemeral and the permanent.

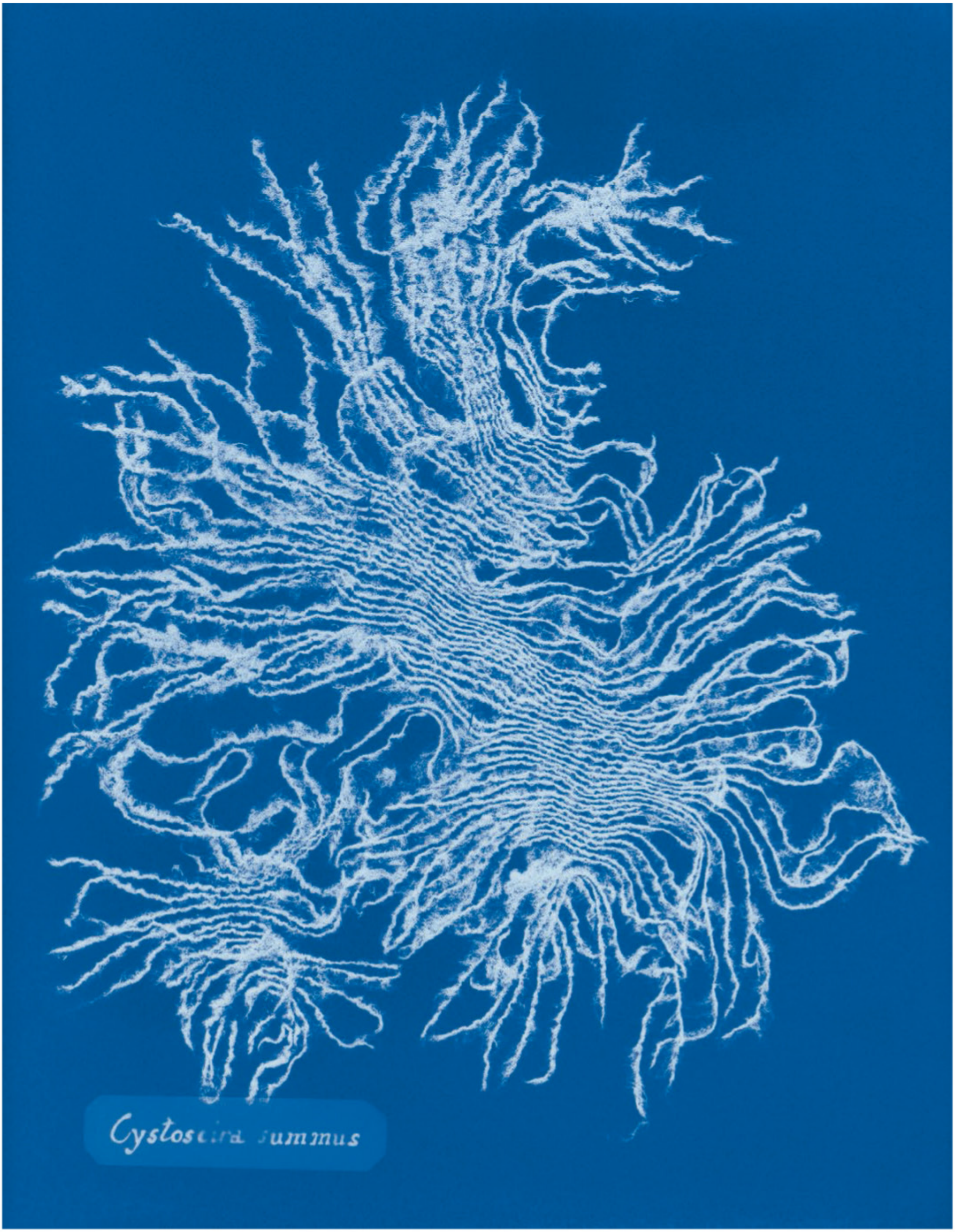


Above: Bordadoras

In this process, photography ceases to be a static document and transforms into a living surface – one that can be touched, felt, and reconstructed with every thread.

AP: If someone unfamiliar with your work could take away one key message from Traces, what would you want it to be?
YH: Look around and ask yourself: what will remain of you in a hundred years? Life is ephemeral, a fleeting blink in time, but the traces we leave on the earth, in the memories of others, in small gestures, and in the stories we inspire, can transcend our existence.

'Through these images, I seek to reveal the symbiosis that exists between women and plants – both nourish, both heal, both sustain life'


Cystoseira summus

ALL IMAGES © MANDY BARKER

Look again

A tribute to Anna Atkins' classic and pioneering cyanotypes, Mandy Barker hopes to make a new generation stop and think about the impact of fast fashion. She tells **Amy Davies** all about it

What do you think you see when you look at the bold cyanotypes on these pages?

At first glance, they are almost indistinguishable from the Victorian pictures of algae, created by the pioneering photographer Anna Atkins, who is credited with creating the first ever photo book in 1843.

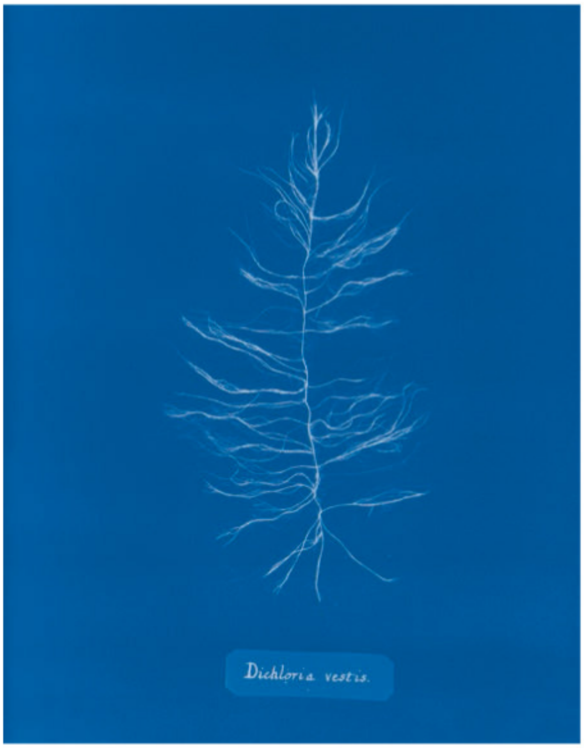
But they're not. They're by Mandy Barker, taken in the past ten years or so, and don't show algae at all. These are the remnants of textile garments, long forgotten about, discarded and washing up on shorelines.

As beautiful as they are, they're a stark reminder that 'fast fashion' has an impact. And it's a big one. Reports suggest that the industry is a catastrophe for our planet. Here in the UK, we are particularly guilty of adding to the problem. In 2020, the UK government estimated that 300,000 tonnes of clothes are burned or buried in landfill each year. Many of these items have never even been sold or worn, it's just a quick, cheap – and dirty – way to get rid of unsold stock as the shops feed our incessant cravings for new and cheap fashions.

Left: Tank top (Cystoseira summus)

Below: Coat lining (Dichloria vestis)

All images © Mandy Barker


Dichloria vestis.

Another report suggests that the fashion industry is responsible for 10% of global emissions, with a staggering 85% of all clothing produced ending up in dumps.

Sadly, it has been estimated that even if we stopped all clothes manufacture right now, there would be enough garments on our planet to clothe the next six generations.

New and old

These are all sobering statistics that should make us think twice about our own clothing needs and what we can do to help. For Mandy Barker, who has made a name for herself photographing rubbish and plastic debris, it was obvious how she could contribute – by publicising the problem in a new – or in fact very, very old – and interesting way.

'I've been collecting clothing for ten years, initially without really any direction of how I was going to present it,' she explains.

'After I'd been collecting clothing for about five years, I happened to go and see Anna Atkins' book at the Royal Society. The presentation of it blew my mind in terms of the detail – it was such a beautiful object, with a red leather cover, stunning prints, gold foil edges, gold embossing – everything about it was something I wanted to replicate. Because she was acknowledged as making the first photo book, and known for representing science through cyanotypes, it occurred to me that I could do the same thing, 180 years later. I wanted the viewer to see my work and think, "oh that looks like an Anna Atkins print" but then read the caption and be taken aback by what I'm trying to represent.'

Initially, Mandy was so keen to exactly replicate Atkins' work that it became a bit of an obsession, albeit one that the clothing lent itself well to, with unravelling strands which easily emulate the algae. As she went on however, she became less controlled with it, moving away from close replicas. 'It became my take on it, instead,' she explains. 'It's almost like the clothing itself began telling its own message.'

Painstaking

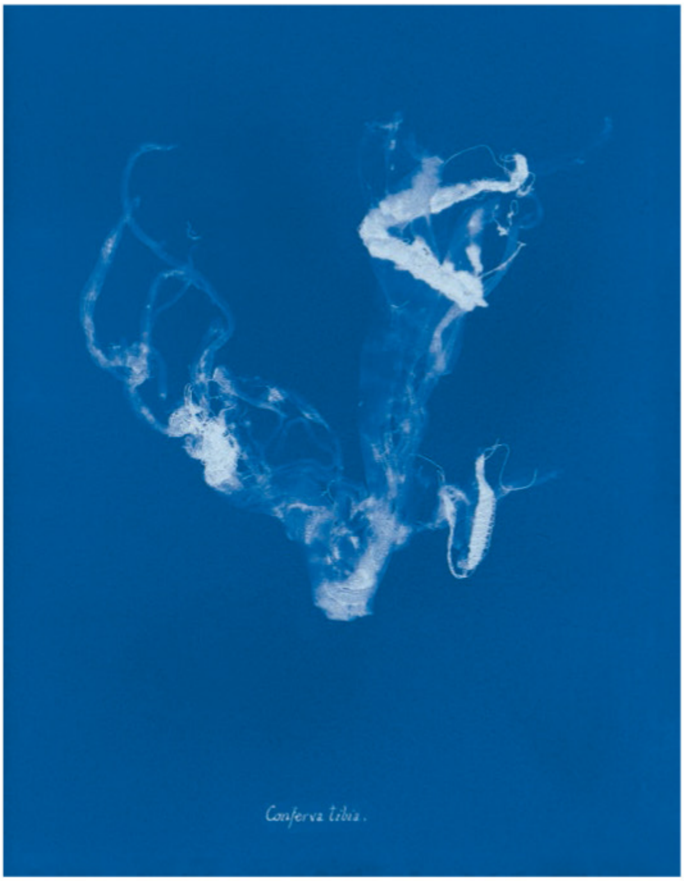
Each of Mandy's pieces is accompanied by a Latin text, with handwriting painstakingly copied from Atkins' own. The first part of the name are the same names Atkins used for seaweed, with the second part being a Latin name for the piece of clothing used to create the print. It's these small details which really bring the project together and create the illusion that you're looking at something completely different from the reality.

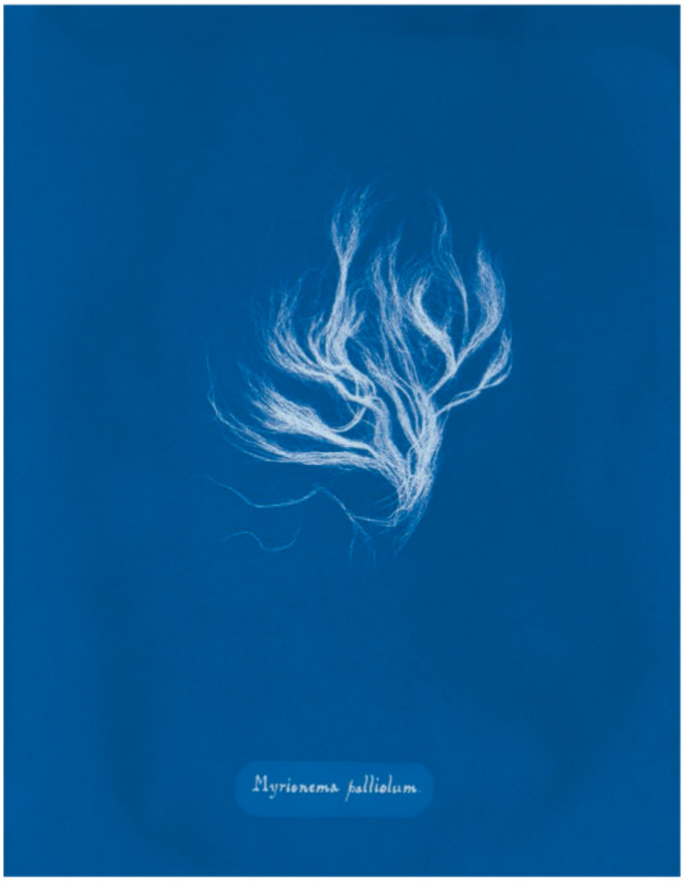
It was also important to show the diversity of the problem, with an array of different clothing displayed on each page. Mandy organised the book starting with typical outer layers, such as parkas, all the way down to underwear.

There's also a depressing sense of scale. The clothing was collected across the length and breadth of the British Isles – a map on Mandy's website reveals the extent of the issue. 'It wouldn't be representative to just go to one beach, perhaps that had storms the previous day and churned up a load of stuff. Collecting from many beaches shows the diversity and wide-ranging areas of collection as well as the different garments.

'I also don't like to highlight any particular area. You can go to a beach that's had spring tides that is piled up with all sorts of plastic, not just clothing. Two weeks later, it's all washed away and it's down the coast or back out to sea. I just say *everywhere* has the problem.'

Mandy describes the finding of that first piece of clothing as a life-changing experience.





Above, left: Nylon tights (Conferva tibia)

Above, right: Synthetic fur hood (Myrionema Palliolum)

'When I first saw it in a rock pool, I thought it was a lovely piece of seaweed with beautiful colours. I went to pick it up and was kind of astounded to see that it was a strip of clothing exactly the same shape as a piece of seaweed. I decided there and then to start collecting – I'd seen it all the time, but never picked it up – I was collecting plastic, but not clothing.

'I've got a storage problem with the amount I've got, and it has become a bit of an obsession to find as many different items as possible. By doing that, I could further raise awareness. Atkins collected seaweed – plastic wasn't even invented then and clothing wasn't found in the places she was looking. Now, this is often what we find in place of her natural algae.'

The process of creating the cyanotypes takes place at Mandy's studio. 'I collect the clothing, which is often damp, and I bring it back to press under an old Victorian book press to make it as flat as possible. Sometimes I leave it as it is, sometimes I might pull some of the threads to change the look and perhaps match Atkins' style. I then make a photogram of the material, and the cyanotypes in the garden. I coat the paper using the material itself – I wrap it around and sponge, dip the clothing into the solution and coat the paper using it because I thought it would be interesting for the material to create its own cyanotype – also they have the microfibres in there, so there's a good chance some of those will also end up within the print.'

Anyone who knows anything about cyanotypes will know that they work best on very sunny days, allowing for quicker exposures. But this is another aspect to the project – it reflects our warming planet. Some of the prints were made on the hottest day of the year, during the warmest year on record, taking mere seconds due to the brightness and heat available.

Further attention to detail comes from the cyanotype mixture and the papers used for the prints themselves. In the year before Atkins started creating her cyanotypes, John Herschel discovered the process, creating the chemical mix used to make them. 'I've used his recipe,' Mandy says. 'But I have made some additions so that the overall solution is my own. I tried to create the same colour Atkins had in her book. Today cyanotypes are often a very dark blue, but the ones in her bound book are a slightly lighter blue. It's quite a hard thing to get right, so I've been experimenting for quite a long time. Not only that but you might find the right colour, but then use it on a different paper and find it reacts differently.'

The paper was also a precious commodity, being original 1800s Whatman paper sourced from a vintage paper firm. 'I just wanted to replicate the book as closely as possible – with the same paper, the same marbling techniques, the same binding, everything that was done for the handmade book [a one-off handmade book was made before this new standard, widely available printing]. I wanted to pass it off as Atkins' book – actually I wanted to swap it with the original, but realised I'd probably get arrested. I wanted it to be a different way of presenting it to the public.'

Mandy's previous work was created digitally, but she feels using this older, analogue technique

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opens her up to a different audience, which is all the more important for awareness. 'It's more interesting, and hopefully the public will find it so rather than just seeing another similar churned-out image from before and it will hopefully make people stop and think. People often try to cut down on their carbon footprint, by not flying and so on – but if they're regularly buying something, wearing it once or twice and then discarding it, that's doing more damage – it's a huge problem.'

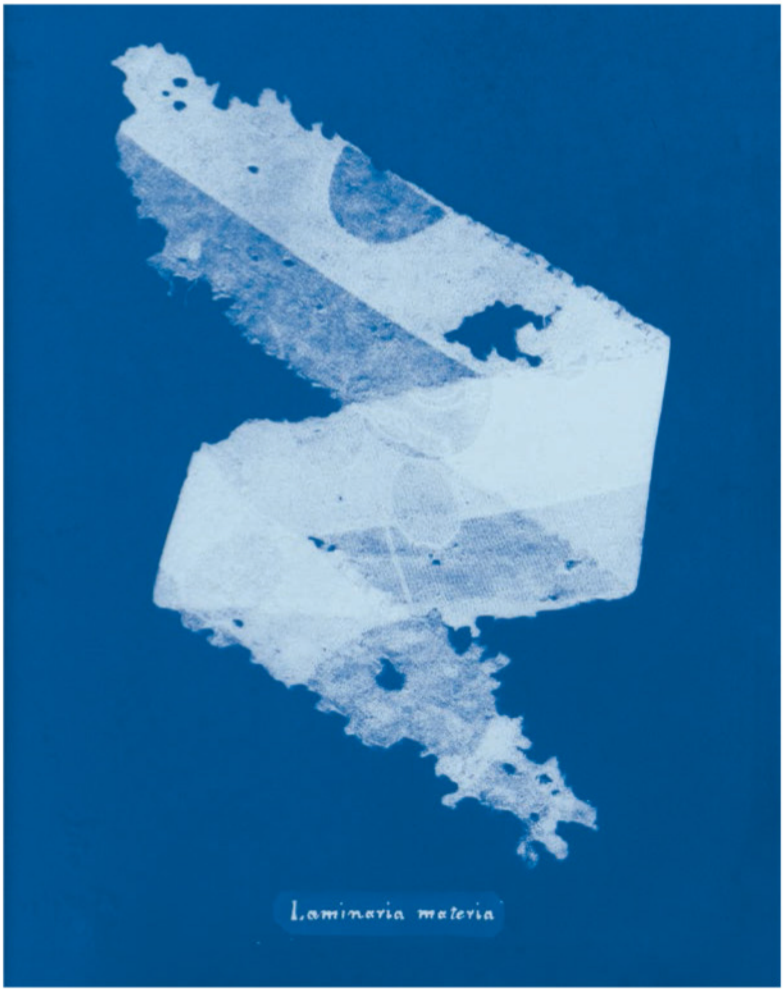
Beyond the environmental issues, Mandy was also keen to showcase more about Anna Atkins, too. 'She was relatively unknown until the '70s. They thought the initials "AA" on her print stood for "Anonymous Amateur". Of course women were very underrepresented at that time, and weren't really taken seriously. So, to give more attention to her work as well is a real bonus.'

People that matter

Getting the book in front of people that matter is crucial for Mandy. 'With the handmade book I could use it for exhibitions and so on, but with this printing, I hope it will reach people who will think about policies and so on. I did a Kickstarter to raise money for the book, sending it to quite a lot of people in the fashion industry – who were actually in agreement and trying to make changes – they funded the book. In a way, I've already reached some of the right people. I just hope it makes people think.'

All the prints in this book were made from clothes collected in Britain, but this is far from just a domestic issue. 'There's huge clothing tips in places like the Atacama Desert with clothing from big high street brands still with the tags on. Mountains of clothing in Ghana too, it's all just rushing onto the beaches. I would like to expand it to reach audiences far and wide with their local problems concerning fast fashion.'

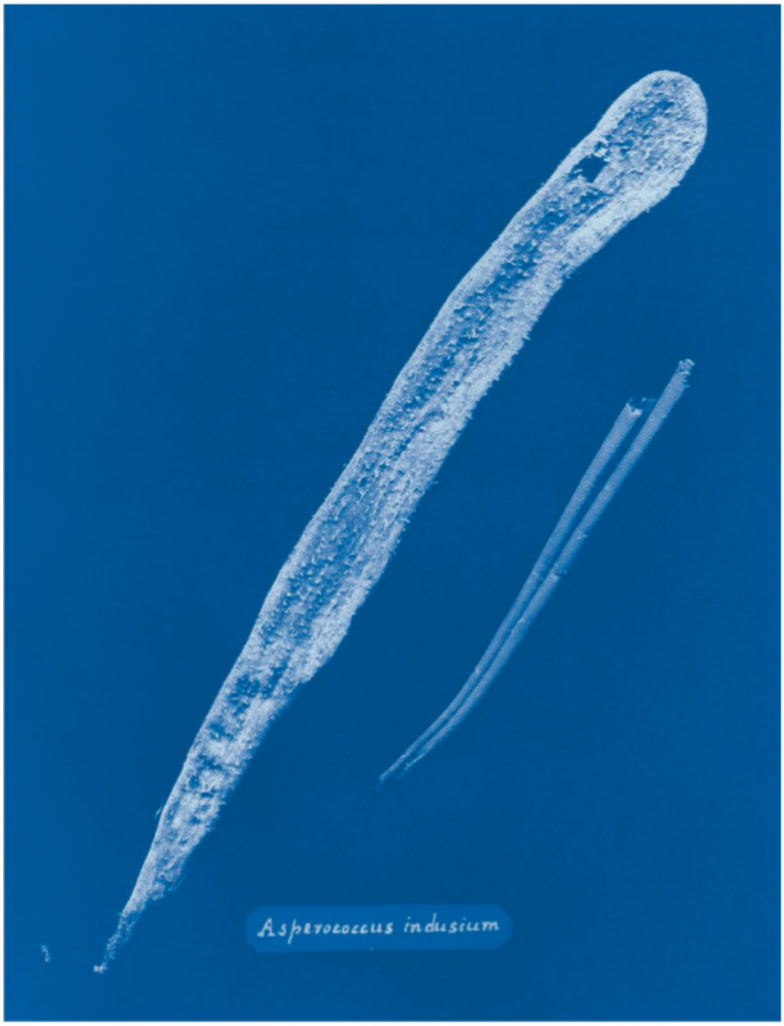
Another hope is for a solo exhibition dedicated to the work, although some of the prints will be seen in this year's Royal Academy Summer Exhibition (17 June to 17 August). For now, the book is ready to buy, and its message is as vital as it is beautiful – buy it now, and tell everyone about it, too.



Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Imperfections by Mandy Barker is available to buy now. Published by GOST, RRP £50, 160 pages, hardback, ISBN: 9781915423795.

Above: Patterned blouse (Laminaria materia)

Right: Two blouses (Asperococcus indusium)



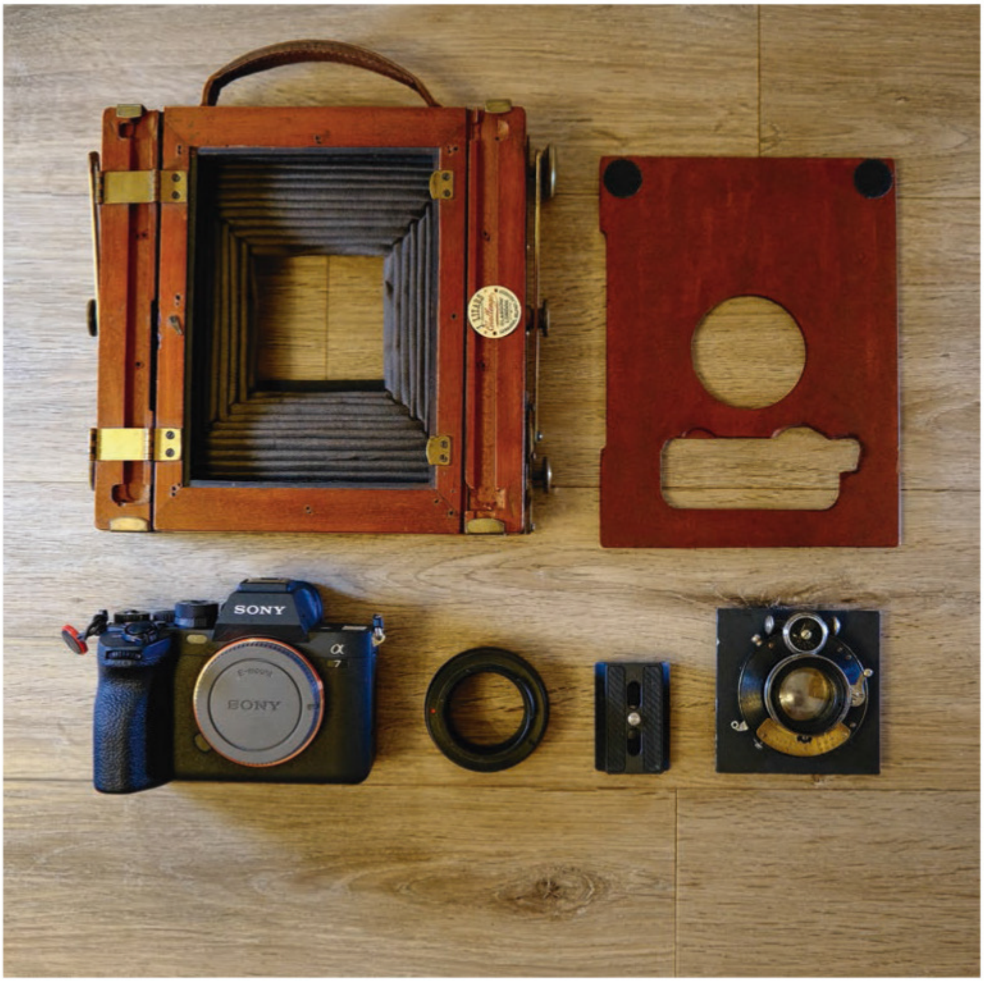
Something old, something new

Andrew Walker explains how he fashioned a digital back to bring new life to a 100-year-old field camera lying dormant in a loft, and tells **Damien Demolder** what it has done for his photography

Many years ago, when digital SLR cameras were still a relatively new thing, Kodak proudly displayed what the firm thought was an incredible innovation at the Photokina camera show in Germany. At the time its DSC Pro 14n, with its noisy 13.5MP full-frame sensor, was the peak of the company's offering and considered to possess remarkable resolution which, in relative terms for the day, it did. Kodak hoped the world would harness the dramatic quality of the camera to supplant large-format film by producing a back for Sinar 5x4in monorail cameras that the camera could be mounted to.

The process of course involved replacing a 127x101mm imaging area with one that was 36x24mm, so although the world would still be able to use the movements of their large-format cameras and their large-format lenses, the area of the DSC Pro 14n's sensor meant your standard 180mm lens would suddenly behave like a 648mm lens – which would be like your 50mm lens for full frame being subject to a crop that made it behave like a 180mm. It was an idea certainly, but a bit of a pointless one as a commercial proposition.

Twenty or so years later Andrew Walker had the same idea, but for a completely different reason. A policeman who loves gadgets and film photography, Andrew used the same principle to bring an old wooden camera back to life and to see what effects he could get by mounting his Sony A7 to the back of a beautiful field camera his wife's aunt found in her loft.

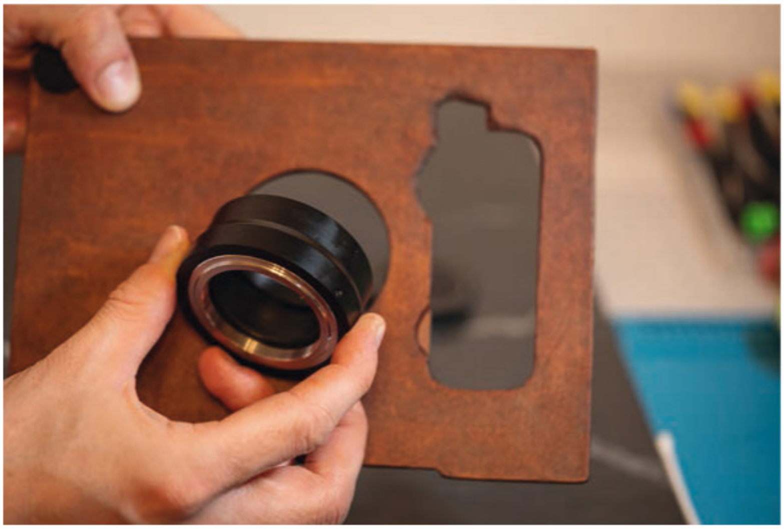


PICTURES © ANDREW WALKER

Above: The component parts of Andrew's kit, including the wooden board he cut for the Sony

One extreme to the other

By day Andrew Walker is a drone-operating policeman, flying the latest aerial beasts and using AI to help identify and track baddies as well as operating search missions for missing people in and around the Peak District. When he isn't buzzing his DJI Matrice 300 through the skies he's very much on the ground with his collection of film and digital cameras shooting the towns and landscapes of the beautiful part of the world he lives in. 'I've been taking pictures for about ten years now, and started off like everyone else with a digital camera. My dad gave me his old camera and I started



Clockwise from top left:

Andrew uses a lens adapter to hold the Sony camera in place

Being able to shift the lens up and down helps to keep buildings looking straight because the camera doesn't need to tilt

Using the Sony shutter instead of the lens shutter means he has a wider range of speeds

Switching the digital pictures to black & white instantly gives them an old look

to get into film as well. I like to get old cameras cleaned up and working again too, and have restored a few box Brownies and some Pentax SLRs; and I've been shooting with an old Yashicamat TLR medium format 120 film camera. People around me know I'm into all this old stuff, so when my wife's auntie found a box of cameras while she was clearing out her loft she sent me a picture and asked if they were any good to me. Obviously I was like "Yes, please" and went round there straight away. There were about a dozen or so cameras, from Pentax bodies to this wooden field camera.

At first I didn't really know what to do with this one and thought perhaps it would be nice to put on display in the lounge as a centrepiece, but the more I thought about it the more I was convinced I should restore it to full working order. I considered making some glass plates for it but on looking into it realised what a minefield that would be – so I decided to convert it for digital photography instead.'

Hit and miss

'My idea was to make a board to fit where the ground glass screen should have been that I could use to mount my camera. That way I'd be able to use the tilt and shift movements of the wooden camera and the lens that came with it, but record the image digitally. I made a cardboard template as a prototype and spent some time working out where the sensor needed to be so that the lens would focus.

This took a lot of trial and error, but after a day of experimenting I'd laser-cut a piece of wood with a hole in the middle that I could poke the lens mount of the Sony A7 through. I had an issue with the handgrip of the Sony, as some of it protrudes further than the end of the mount, so I had to cut a hole for that as well, to enable the lens mount to poke through far enough.

'The camera is held in position with a Pentax K lens adapter that I attached from the other side of the wooden board so that the camera would remain in position and not just fall out when it was moved.

Once I had the idea in my head it was simple to design on my CAD system, but one thing I forgot was that I needed access to the shutter button. I had the camera mounted and was pleased with myself before I realised I couldn't take a picture because the shutter button was on the other side of the board. I could have used a remote trigger, but instead cut another hole for my finger to get through. Obviously this hole lets light into the bellows area and could cause a stray light to spoil the pictures, but when I'm shooting I cover the whole back of the camera with a dark cloth so there are no leaks.'

Restore and repair

'The camera was in remarkably good condition when I got it and only needed minor repairs considering it is over 100 years old. It was made by J Lizars and is the 'Challenge' field camera model, that was probably manufactured at the turn of the last century. The lens it came

Left: The primitive lens coating lends colour shots a pastel feel

Below, top: Andrew had to do some work to clean up the lens before he could use it

Below, bottom: The camera is a wood and brass field model that folds flat for transporting, and it's extremely handsome

with is a Dallmeyer No 3 Stigmatic Series II that has removable elements to change its focal length, so it has two sets of aperture markings. The lens has no focal length marked on it, but when mounted in front of the Sony A7, I get the same sort of angle of view as I would with a 135mm lens on a full-frame camera – so it is probably about 1 3/4in with all the elements in place. It's longer with the rear element removed.

'The lens was a bit dirty and the shutter unit it's mounted to was jammed, so I took all that apart, cleaned it up and lubricated the moving parts. I have a bit of a mechanical mind so it all made sense to me when I opened it up, and I was careful to put it back together again in the same order. The shutter unit now works and I can select the speeds, but rather than setting the Sony A7 to Bulb each time and using the shutter unit behind the lens, it's simpler to keep the lens open and use the Sony's shutter. That gives me a wider range of speeds and probably more consistency.

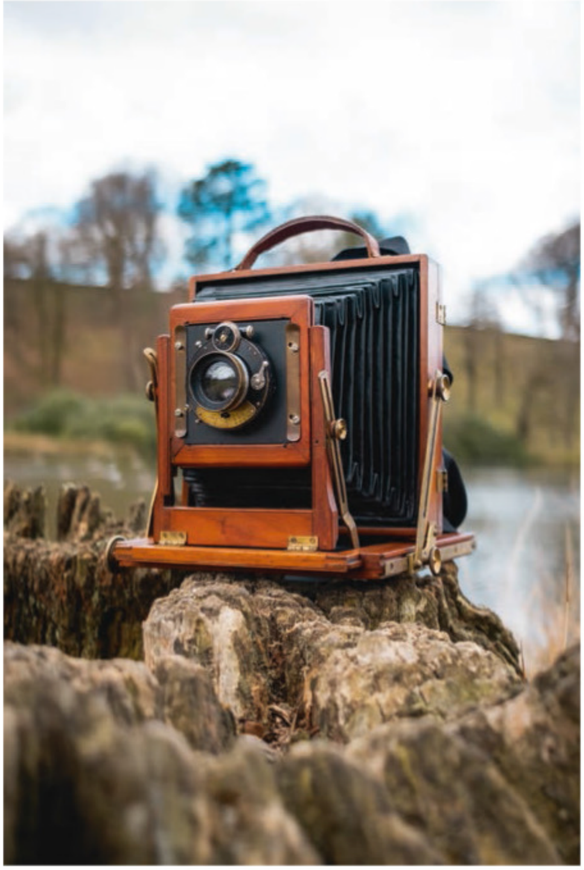
'On shining a light on the bellows I could see there were quite a lot of pin-prick holes, which wasn't surprising given their age. A leather paint made them look better and it filled the holes at the same time. It's a rubbery, plastic paint that can stretch and flex with the movement of the material. You obviously can't use any type of paint for this, as it would just crack and fall off.

'Fortunately I used to have a little craft leather business, because when I picked up the camera for the first time the handle broke. I had all the kit to hand-stitch a new one in exactly the same size, shape and colour as the original.

'The camera didn't come with the ground glass screen, but that's on my list of things to replace at some stage. It doesn't help me now as I'm using the Sony camera, but I have a sheet of glass the right size and thickness ready to use. My dad works in a glass factory and has got me some etching fluid to give it the frosted finish it will need.'

And, why?

I wondered what it was that inspired Andrew to go to such



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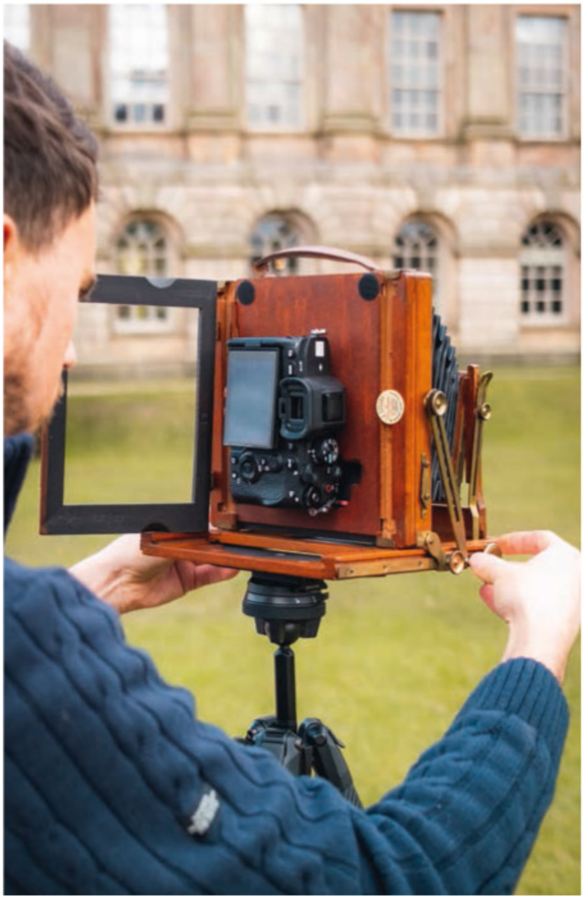
lengths to get this old beast up and running when he already has a number of perfectly serviceable cameras. 'It's just an "Andrew" thing to do! I'd been looking out for an older camera for a while and the wooden ones look really quite unique – I like the feel of nostalgia about them, so when this one came up I jumped at it. I like the simplicity of these old cameras, and it's nice to remind ourselves where photography has come from. The other attraction of course was the ability to tilt and shift the lens board to play with how the focused areas appear and to correct perspectives. There's something special about the look of pictures taken with a tilted lens, and it's a strong link to the past – and with a digital camera on the back of the camera I'm not spending hundreds of pounds on sheet film. The lens also gives a particular look that I can't achieve with my usual lenses. There's a bit of a haze and the pictures don't have the clarity you get with a modern lens, so when you turn them black & white they instantly look very old. It works well in colour too though, and there's surprisingly little fringing – it's a very nice "glowy" look.

'The slowing down is another great thing. We live in a fast-paced world, and everything is so quick, quick, quick, that it's easy to forget to do things for fun. We get so overwhelmed with trying to keep up all the time, but sometimes going back to less is what's needed. Through my work I've met people from all walks of life and have seen that money doesn't make you happy. An appreciation of the simpler things in life can though. I'm only 31 but have developed the mind of a 90-year-old man.

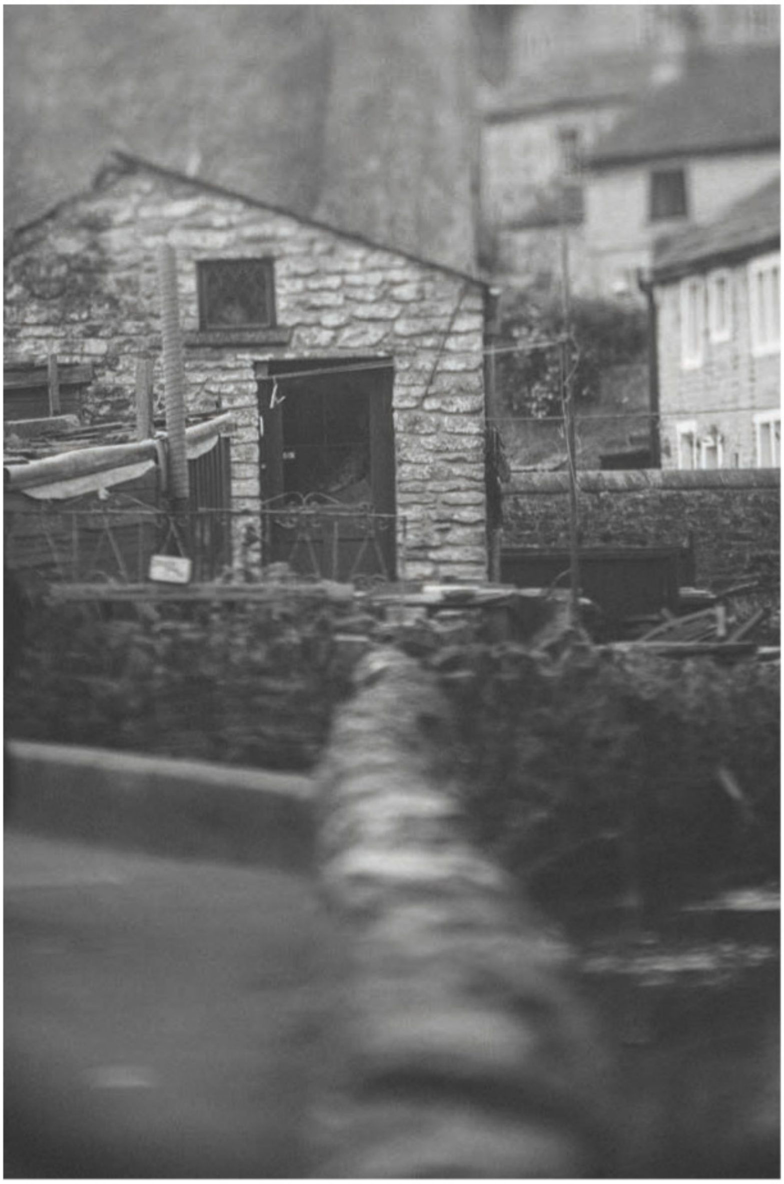
'There's more satisfaction in working hard at something and getting a result that is different to that which I would have got the more convenient way. I like taking my time and the whole process of working with the camera. It has allowed me to go back to places I've shot a hundred times before and to make completely different pictures of them, and it has massively changed the way I shoot and feel about photography.'

'It's great to have been able to take this camera out of a dusty loft where it had been sitting unused for years, to clean it up and to bring it back to life. It is still going, after more than a hundred years. I don't suppose many modern cameras will still be usable in a hundred years from now, but this thing will probably supersede me.'

www.instagram.com/ajwphotographic/



Above: Here's the Sony mounted to the back of the folding camera. There are more than 100 years between them



Left: Tilting the lens board forwards or backwards allows Andrew to manipulate the placement of the depth of field, giving the appearance of more focus or less focus

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A round-up of the AP testing team's favourite and most highly rated kit, including both cameras and all kinds of accessories, across a wide range of price points

OM System Tough TG-7

● £449 ● explore.omsystem.com

This latest model in a long line of class-leading rugged cameras is waterproof to 15m, shockproof against a 2.1m drop, crushproof and freezeproof. The 25-100mm equivalent lens is paired with a 12MP sensor, with in-body stabilisation to combat shake. Viewing is via a 3in LCD. The TG-7 is also one of the few cameras of its type that can record raw files.

★★★★☆ **Reviewed 2 Apr 2024**

Canon PowerShot G7 X Mark III

● £849 ● www.canon.co.uk

This lovely little pocket camera provides a good range of features for both photography and video. You get a 20MP 1in sensor, 24-100mm equivalent f/1.8-2.8 zoom lens, 4K 30p video recording, and a tilting rear screen. It's ideal for those who'd like more advanced controls than on a smartphone.

★★★★☆ **Reviewed 28 Sep 2019**

Fujifilm X100VI

● £1,599 ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

The sixth version of Fujifilm's charismatic rangefinder-styled compact boasts a 40MP APS-C sensor in front of its fixed 23mm f/2 lens. It also gains in-body stabilisation while barely increasing in size. Traditional analogue control dials are joined by a unique hybrid optical/electronic viewfinder and a tilting touchscreen on the back. It's a truly fabulous camera.

★★★★★

Reviewed 9 Apr 2024

Ricoh GR III

● £949 ● ricohgr.eu/en-gb

A favourite of street photographers, the GR III combines a 24MP APS-C sensor and a sharp 28mm equivalent f/2.8 lens in a slim, pocketable body. It offers sensitivities up to ISO 102,400 and 4fps shooting, while in-body image stabilisation helps keeps image sharp. Viewing is via a fixed 3in rear LCD or an optional optical viewfinder that slots onto the hot shoe.

★★★★☆

Reviewed 3 Aug 2019

Sony RX100 VII

● £1,050 ● www.sony.co.uk

Sony has somehow crammed a 24-200mm equivalent zoom, pop-up electronic viewfinder, tilting screen, 20 fps shooting and 4K video recording into a body that you can slip into a jacket pocket. With the firm's latest AF technology also on board, it's without doubt the most accomplished pocket camera on the market.

★★★★½

Reviewed 5 Oct 2019

Sony RX10 IV

● £1,500 ● www.sony.co.uk

This sets a new standard for superzoom cameras, with a 24-600mm equivalent lens, 20MP 1in sensor, and 24 fps continuous shooting. Its SLR-shaped body hosts a large electronic viewfinder and a decent set of physical controls. It's the best all-in-one camera for wildlife or travel photography that you can buy right now.

★★★★★

Reviewed 2 Dec 2017

Canon EOS 250D

● £650 with 18-55mm IS lens ● www.canon.co.uk

One of the smallest DSLRs around, the EOS 250D strikes a great balance between portability and usability. It's equipped with a novice-friendly Guided Mode, while Canon's Dual Pixel CMOS sensor provides excellent autofocus in live view. Image quality is very good, delivering vibrant colours and plenty of fine detail.

★★★★☆

Reviewed 7 Sep 2019

Olympus OM-D E-M10 Mark IV

● £749 with 14-42mm ● explore.omsystem.com

With a charismatic retro design, fine handling, highly effective in-body stabilisation and attractive JPEG output, Olympus has made a camera that's more pleasant to use than its entry-level competitors. Its 20MP sensor delivers good results up to ISO 3200 at least, and its tilting screen can be set to face forwards beneath the camera.

★★★★½

Reviewed 26 Sep 2020

Fujifilm X-T5

● £1,699 body only ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

Fujifilm's latest X-T model is a great choice for serious enthusiast photographers. It boasts a 40MP APS-C sensor housed in a retro-styled body covered with traditional analogue control dials. Subject-detection autofocus, in-body stabilisation and Fujifilm's lovely colour modes round off an extremely desirable package.

★★★★★

Reviewed 3 Jan 2023

Canon EOS R50

● £899 with 15-45mm lens ● www.canon.co.uk

With the EOS R50, Canon has fitted some impressive technology into a compact and lightweight body. It boasts highly capable subject recognition autofocus coupled with rapid continuous shooting. Image quality is very pleasing too, with attractive files direct from the camera. It also works well with EF-mount DSLR lenses.

★★★★☆

Reviewed 6 Jun 2023

Fujifilm X-T30 II

● £899 with 15-45mm lens ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

This lovely little camera provides excellent performance, while preserving the charm and charisma of the X-series. It's a great all-rounder, and handles exceptionally well thanks to an intuitive interface based around traditional analogue dials. Image quality is superb in both raw and JPEG, aided by Fujifilm's peerless Film Simulation modes.

★★★★★

Reviewed 8 Feb 2022

Panasonic Lumix GH7

● £1,999 body only ● www.panasonic.com/uk

Panasonic's flagship Micro Four Thirds camera is aimed at videographers, but holds its own when capturing stills as well. Its 25MP sensor delivers plenty of detail, while enabling 5.7K recording at 60fps, or 4K at 120fps. Autofocus is much improved over the firm's older models, too. Pro-spec video functionality and effective in-body stabilisation round off a fine package.

★★★★★

Reviewed 05 Nov 2024

Fujifilm X-S20

● £1,249 body only ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

Styled like a mini DSLR, the X-S20 uses electronic dials for changing exposure settings, as opposed to the X-T series' analogue controls. But you still get Fujifilm's signature fine image quality, along with in-body image stabilisation. It also boasts an array of advanced video features, making it a great choice for vloggers and photographers alike.

★★★★★

Reviewed 25 Jul 2023

Panasonic Lumix G9 II

● £1,699 body only ● www.panasonic.com/uk

Panasonic's high-end Micro Four Thirds camera provides an impressive set of features. It can shoot 25MP still images at up to 75fps, and 5.7K video at 60fps. You get an excellent control layout, incredibly effective in-body stabilisation, and very capable subject recognition autofocus. A good range of small, excellent Leica-branded lenses is available to match.

★★★★★

Reviewed 31 Oct 2023

OM System OM-1 Mark II

● £2,199 body only ● explore.omsystem.com

Updated version of this high-speed powerhouse gains some handy new features. It's capable of shooting at 120fps with focus fixed, or 50fps with AF, but now with double the buffer for extended bursts. AI subject detection recognises vehicles, animals and birds. It also boasts IP53-rated weather-sealing and includes class-leading stabilisation.

★★★★★

Review 12 Mar 2024

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Nikon Z6III

● £2,499 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

This mid-range model is one of the finest all-round cameras for enthusiast users on the market. It marries excellent autofocus and super-fast continuous shooting with solid build quality and a refined control layout. The viewfinder is particularly bright, and joined by a fully articulated touchscreen. It's at least a match for any other camera in its class.

★★★★★

Reviewed
8 Oct 2024

Sony Alpha 7 IV

● £2,399 body only ● www.sony.co.uk

Sony's latest enthusiast-focused full-frame mirrorless model sets a new standard in its class. Its 33MP full-frame sensor delivers excellent image quality, and it can shoot at up to 10fps. Its practically foolproof subject-detection AF can now recognise birds as well as humans and animals. A large, clear viewfinder and fully articulated touchscreen round off the package.

★★★★★

Reviewed
11 Dec 2021

Nikon D780

● £1,999 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

This highly accomplished 24MP full-frame model shows that there's life in the DSLR yet. It's superbly built with extensive weather sealing, handles brilliantly, and gives excellent results in any conditions. It'll provide top-level service to photographers who want to keep using their F-mount lenses and still prefer an optical viewfinder.

★★★★★

Reviewed
4 Apr 2020

Nikon Z 7II

● £2,499 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

Nikon has delivered a sensible update to its flagship high-res model, with an additional SD card slot and slightly faster shooting. As before, its 45.7MP sensor gives stunning image quality, backed up by 5-axis in-body image stabilisation and fast, accurate autofocus. The viewfinder is superb, and F-mount SLR lenses can be used via the FTZ adapter.

★★★★½

Reviewed
6 Feb 2021

Nikon Z 9

● £5,299 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

Without doubt Nikon's finest camera yet, the Z 9 combines high resolution, breathtaking speed, subject-recognition autofocus and pro-level build. It's capable of shooting 45.7MP raw files at 20fps for 1,000 frames, and 11MP JPEGs at 120fps. It can also record 8K video. With its superb viewfinder and tilting rear screen, it's probably the most capable camera around.

★★★★★

Reviewed
22 Mar 2022

Canon EOS R6 Mark II

● £1,999 body only ● www.canon.co.uk

Based around a 24MP full-frame sensor, this brilliant all-rounder will do almost anything you might ask it to. It combines reliable subject-detection AF, rapid continuous shooting, and effective image stabilisation in a body that handles well and gives great results. It also works well with adapted EF-mount DSLR lenses.

★★★★★

Reviewed
21 Mar 2023

Sony Alpha 7R V

● £3,999 body only ● www.sony.co.uk

With its 61MP full-frame sensor, the A7R V provides class-leading image quality while adding a whole array of improvements over its predecessor. These include subject-detection AF, a larger, more detailed viewfinder, and a more flexible rear LCD design. For those whose needs are more about image quality than speed, it's probably the best full-frame camera you can buy.

★★★★★

Reviewed
17 Jan 2023

Leica M11 Monochrom

● £8,300 body only ● uk.leica-camera.com

Within its own specialist niche, this monochrome-only manual-focus rangefinder is almost perfect. Its build quality is stunning, and the pared-back design allows you to immerse yourself completely in the process of taking pictures. Most importantly, the 60.1MP sensor produces fantastic results, reaching a new pinnacle in black & white image quality.

★★★★★

Reviewed
16 May 2023

Fujifilm GFX100 II

● £6,999 body only ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

Fujifilm's latest super-high resolution medium-format camera places an updated 102MP sensor in a pro-spec modular body. Subject-detection autofocus is on board for animals, birds and vehicles, while in-body image stabilisation helps keep handheld shots sharp. It's the ideal camera for serious photographers who demand the ultimate in image quality.

★★★★★

Reviewed
21 Nov 2023

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Tenba DNA 9 Slim Messenger

● £110 ● uk.tenba.com

If you'd like a small shoulder bag to carry a camera and a couple of lenses, this is among the best you'll find. Measuring 28cm wide by 20cm tall, it's well suited to holding a mirrorless camera or a compact DSLR. The quality of materials and construction is excellent, and there are plenty of handy pockets for organising accessories.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 26 Apr 2022**

Vanguard Veo Select 46BR

● £120 ● www.vanguardworld.co.uk

This backpack is capable of swallowing a substantial amount of kit while retaining a travel-friendly 28cm slim profile. An array of access points allow you to get at your kit from the back, top or either side. It's capable of holding a full-frame DSLR with 4-6 lenses along with a 13in laptop.

★★★★★

Reviewed 6 Jul 2019

Wandrd Prvke 31

● £279 (photography bundle) ● eu.wandrd.com

This spacious backpack offers an excellent combination of uncluttered style, rugged construction and a selection of genuinely useful pockets. The roll-close top section is the icing on the cake that always seems to allow just one more item to be squeezed in. Crucially, it's comfortable to carry over long distances.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 11 Sep 2021**

NiSi NM-180 Macro Rail

● £105 ● www.nisioptics.co.uk

Arguably the best macro focusing rail available right now, the NM-180 combines excellent quality build with super-smooth operation. It's easily capable of supporting a full-frame SLR while offering up to 130mm of travel, with a fold-out handle providing fine adjustment. It also boasts extensive compatibility with the Arca Swiss quick release system, with a dovetail profile along its base and a rotating clamp on top.

★★★★★

Reviewed 24 Oct 2020

Cullmann Rondo 460M RB8.5

● £75 ● www.transcontinenta.co.uk/cullmann

If you want a fully featured tripod kit on a budget, this is a great choice. Four-section aluminium legs provide a max height of 160cm, while packing down to 43.5cm. It's rated to support a 4kg load, weighs 1.46kg, and one leg can be combined with the centre column to form a monopod.

★★★★½

Reviewed 21 Mar 2020

MeFOTO RoadTrip PRO

● £225 ● uk.benroeu.com

Few tripods come close to matching this one for sheer versatility. It extends to 152.5cm, folds down to 38.5cm and weighs 1.37kg. One leg can be detached for use as a monopod or boom arm, and there's even a small desktop stand stowed inside the centre column. It's sturdy enough to support a full-frame mirrorless set-up.

★★★★★

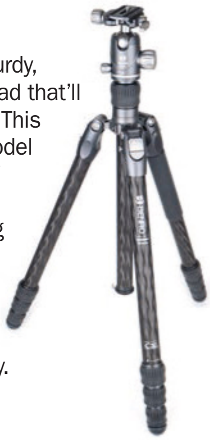
Reviewed 12 April 2022

Benro Rhino 24C tripod with VX25 head

● £250 ● uk.benroeu.com

Benro has got pretty much everything right with this sturdy, well-designed tripod and head that'll support a substantial load. This four-section carbon fibre model offers a maximum height of almost 1.7m, while folding down to 49cm and weighing 1.74kg. It's easily capable of supporting a full-frame DSLR with a telephoto zoom. Quite simply, it's a fantastic kit for the money.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 28 Nov 2020**



NiSi True Color ND-Vario 1-5 stops

● £89-£189 ● www.nisioptics.co.uk

This high-quality variable neutral density filter is ideal for regulating the amount of light entering your lens, without introducing any colour cast. It's optically excellent, boasts an oil and water-repellent coating, and includes a handy and accurate density scale. It's available in sizes from 40.5mm to 95mm.

★★★★★

Reviewed 24 May 2022

Benro SupaDupa Pro MSDPL46C

● £190 ● uk.benroeu.com

It may have a ridiculous name, but this five-section carbon fibre model might just be the best monopod we've ever tested. One clip leg lock provides easy length adjustment, while the lower twist locks are waterproof. On the top there's a clever bowl head with an Arca-compatible clamp. It's a great choice for those who regularly shoot with large telephotos.

★★★★★

Reviewed 24 April 2021

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Nissin i40

● £159 ● www.kenro.co.uk

A compact flashgun that's designed for mirrorless cameras, the i40 stands out for its high specification, compact size and ease of use. Its auto-zoom head covers lenses from 24-105mm equivalent. With a powerful output that belies its size, and a built-in LED video light, it's available for most brands of camera.

★★★★★

Reviewed
3 May 2014

RØDE Wireless Go II

● £309 ● en.rode.com

RØDE's compact wireless system makes it easier than ever to get high-quality audio for video recording. This dual-channel wireless mic kit includes two transmitter units and a receiver (a single-transmitter set is also available for £200). Key features include built-in rechargeable batteries lasting up to 7 hours, onboard backup recording, and up to 200m range.

RØDE
WIRELESS GO II
RØDE
RØDE
WIRELESS GO II

★★★★★

Reviewed
15 May 2021

Hahnel ProCube2

● £80 ● www.hahnel.ie

This dual battery charger boasts a sturdy metal shell and interchangeable plates that each accept a pair of batteries. An LCD display shows progress, and a 2.4A USB output allows phones or tablets to be charged once the camera batteries are full. Versions are available for all the main camera brands.

hahnel
pro
CUBE2
1365
56%
80%

★★★★★

Reviewed
24 Feb 2018

Datacolor SpyderX Pro

● £159 ● www.datacolor.com

If you like to post-process your images, you need to be sure that your monitor is showing colours accurately. Datacolor has designed the SpyderX to calibrate your display faster than ever before, with the process taking two minutes. For photographers the Pro package makes most sense.

about
most
datacolor
Spyder X

★★★★★

Reviewed 6 Apr 2019

Rotolight NEO 3

● £549 (Ultimate Kit) ● www.rotolight.com

LED lighting technology has advanced in leaps and bounds over recent years. Rotolight's compact on-camera NEO 3 offers a unique feature set thanks to its full colour RGBWW LEDs, with the ability to provide either continuous light or flash in 16.7 million colours. This firm has also programmed in the characteristics of 2,500 colour filters. Power is provided by an NP-F type Li-ion battery.

★★★★½

Reviewed
5 April 2022

Hoya Ultra-Pro Circular Polariser

● £47-£179 ● www.holdan.co.uk

Hoya's premium range of circular polarisers is available in 13 sizes from 37mm to 82mm. These filters feature 16 layers of anti-reflective coatings, high transmission, and are designed to repel water and oil while being scratch and stain resistant. An ultra-thin aluminium frame prevents vignetting when used with wideangle lenses.

HOYA
ULTRA-PRO
FILTER
CIR-PL
HD
Water, Stain & Scratch Resistant

★★★★★

Reviewed
3 Mar 2018

Kase Wolverine K9 100mm Entry-Level Kit

● £385 ● www.kasefilters.com

With this top-quality filter system, Kase has carefully rethought every component. The slimline, low-profile holder benefits from extensive light-sealing, while the 82mm polariser clips into place magnetically; it's also easy to adjust from behind the camera. All of the filters use top-quality glass, and everything fits together into a single case. The result is a top-quality set-up that's easy to use and delivers superb results.

★★★★★

Reviewed
5 Dec 2020

Intrepid Compact Enlarger

● £280 ● www.intrepidcamera.co.uk

For film photography enthusiasts wishing to make prints at home, this compact and affordable unit includes lots of handy features. Based around full-colour LED technology, it supports both mono and colour printing. It's perfect for those who don't have space for a permanent darkroom.

★★★★★

Reviewed
17 July 2021

Fujifilm Instax Link WIDE

● £140 ● www.instax.co.uk

This brilliant portable printer produces great-looking 6x10cm prints on Fujifilm's Instax Wide film. It connects to your smartphone via Bluetooth and is controlled using an attractively designed and intuitive app. Powered by a built-in rechargeable battery and available in white or grey, it'll slip easily into a bag.

★★★★★

Reviewed
25 Jan 2022

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★★★★★

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★★★★★

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★★★★★

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18-200 F3.5/5.6 IS EFS	£299
24-70 F2.8 USM LII box	£999
24-70 F4 IS USM L	£599
24-105 F4 IS USM L	£499
28-300 F3.5/5.6 L IS USM box	£699
35 F1.4 USM LII box	£999
45 F2.8 TSE box	£549
50 F1.2 L USM box	£799
50 F1.4 USM box	£249
60 F2.8 macro EFS	£349
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70-200 F2.8 IS USM LIII box	£1299
70-200 F2.8 IS USM LII	£899
70-300 F4/5.6 IS USM L	£699
70-300 F4/5.6 IS USM II Nano	£499
85 F1.2 USM	£799
85 F1.8 USM	£299
100 F2.8 IS USM L macro	£699
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TAMRON LENSES - SEE WEBSITE

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Olympus Used

OM-5 body

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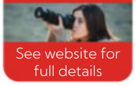

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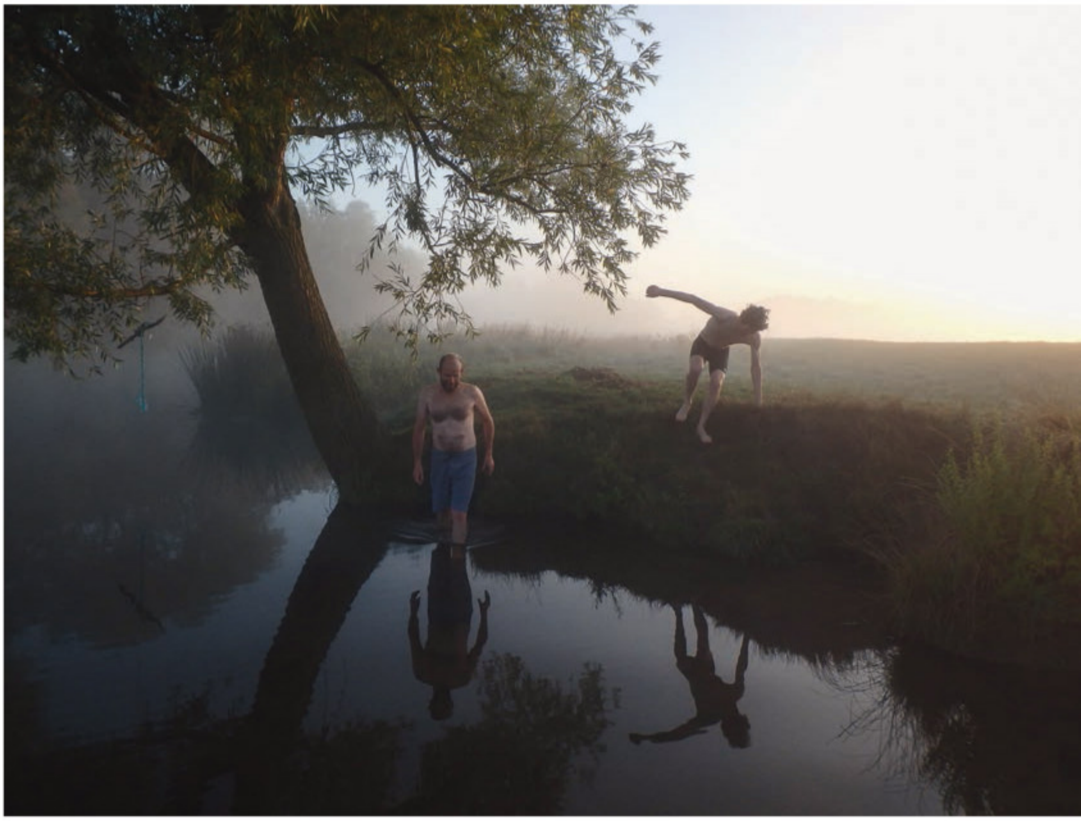
Final Analysis

Paul Hill considers...

From Mid Week Swims, 2025, by George Miles



It was a strange start to a project and an eventual book, but that is often the case with photography.

Derbyshire photography lecturer George Miles was, like us all, enduring Covid lockdown inactivity five years ago. One day he was messing around and put an image of a pile of bricks placed on a carpet on Instagram. It was seen by a Nottingham mate and fellow teenage raver from years back.

He contacted George and asked him for the bricks. Through this strange episode they reacquainted, and his mate told him he had become a wild swimmer, and would George care to join him and his friend for a dip in a local river. That started what became a wet weekly ritual and a book just out entitled *Mid Week Swims* (Hemlockstone Press).

I was looking forward to seeing the book after buying his previous one *The Wolf Hall Picture Book* (HarperCollins) made with famous author, the late Hilary Mantel, and his renowned actor brother, Ben Miles (*The Crown)*.

Atmospheric

I can never see the attraction of getting your kit off to plunge – or tentatively slide in my case – into a river in the middle of winter in England, even one as atmospheric as this one here.

George explained that he wasn't sure about it at first.

But he usually only goes in for less than a minute. So why is it so attractive?

'The cold water makes the blood rush to your core to protect the central organs, and when you get out it returns to the rest of the body, giving you a high.'

Alarmingly, he shares in his book this statistic: 464,056 deliberate sewage 'spills' went into our rivers last year!

'When it looks murky, we go to lagoons in abandoned quarries and gravel pits.'

But it is because it has had a beneficial therapeutic effect on George that he has become an enthusiastic advocate of wild swimming.

'I was in a bad place mentally back then and it has been a big part of my healing journey,' he told me recently in a cafe on the banks of the River Derwent near where he was brought up.

'I decided to make pictures over a year and sequenced the images in the book to create a "rhythm" of the experience as well as an impression of the different seasons. It's a visual diary, in fact.'

To do this he bought a second-hand waterproof Olympus Tough – a compact camera favoured by civil engineers and builders – online for £40. 'It's knackered now, but it did its job!'

Although occasionally joined by other friends and enthusiasts, the three swimmers not only take to the water once a week, but they are also 'middle-aged blokes who enjoy putting the world to rights'.

The book is a beautifully impressionistic and, at times, almost elegiac work that expresses rather than documents this literally immersive activity in a way that makes even me understand the attraction of this eccentric activity. But I don't think I'll try... AP

For more details contact:
georgemiles.co.uk

Among many achievements, Paul Hill has written two books on photography, was director of the Creative Photography course at Trent Polytechnic and has been exhibited numerous times. He was the first photographer to receive an MBE for services to photography and the first professor of photographic practice in a British university. **hillonphotography.co.uk**.

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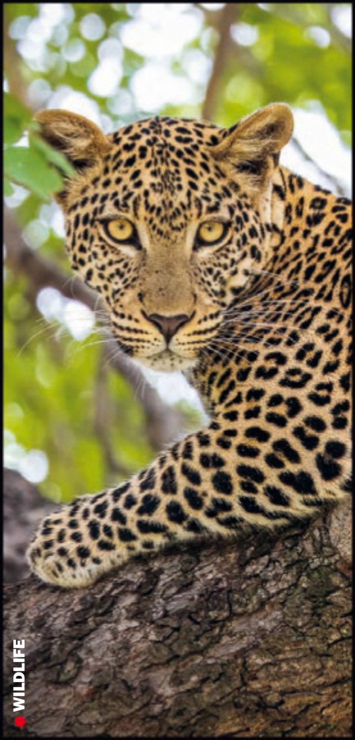

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